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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Tasi Tours has an exclusive concession on Mañagaha Island. Should other operators be allowed to drop Saipan-booked package tours on Mañagaha and then pick up their customers to resume their tours later in the day?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

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NATION

The nation's widest drought in decades is spreading.

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ASIA

Prosecutors file new corruption charges against former President Macapagal Arroyo.

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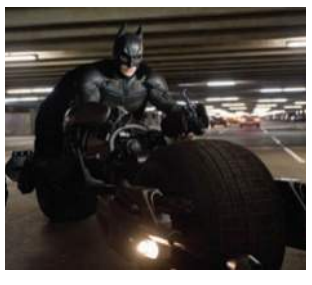

The Batmobile goes into long-term parking after "The Dark Knight Rises."

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ON EXTENSION OF FEDERALIZATION TRANSITION

Alien workers groups unsure

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

While the Fitial administration and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce have already asked Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor for a five-year extension on the federalization transition period set to expire in 2014, nonresident workers groups remain undecided and split on the issue.

See ALIEN on Page 4

Las Vegas Night earns record-breaking $44K

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Saipan Rotary Club posted about $44,000 in gross proceeds from Saturday's Las Vegas Night, an amount that vice president Laila Boyer described as record-breaking in the history of the fundraiser.

The amount, which was from the sales of tickets they produced, surpassed last year's

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Simulated terror attacks play out on Saipan, Tinian

»KONFITMA's 36-hour exercise kicks off

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

An explosion at a pipeline that triggered the release of oil to the water at Charlie Dock; a shooting and hostage taking at Palms Resort Saipan; a shooting encounter between law enforcers and suspected terrorists at the defunct La Fiesta Mall where a laboratory of hazardous materials were discovered; and the discovery of two packages of explosives on Tinian.

These were the terror scenarios that played out as the 36-hour full-scale all-hazard exercise KONFITMA kicked off yesterday on Saipan and Tinian.

Unlike last year, however, this year's exercise had no designated public information officer, as press secretary Angel Demapan is off-island.

CNMI Office of Homeland Security special adviser Marvin Seman, who serves as KONFITMA exercise control, took on the job of providing information and guiding the media to designated areas at the scenes.

There was no confirmation yet from the Fitial administration as to the number of persons "dead, arrested, injured, taken hostages" as the "terrorist attacks" were still ongoing as of press time.

See SIMULATED on Page 4

A Guam National Guard helicopter loaded with law enforcers from Saipan takes off from Hopwood Junior High School grounds yesterday. The helicopter and a rescue boat responded to Tinian where two packages containing "explosives" were found unattended as part of yesterday's kickoff of the annual 36-hour full-scale KONFITMA exercise on Saipan and Tinian. Other photo shows a member of the Tactical Response Enforcement Team handcuffing one of suspected "terrorists" arrested during shootout with law enforcers at the defunct La Fiesta Mall in San Roque.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/ FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Manta Band's budget shortfall narrows to $15K. **PAGE 2**

Basa: Tinian budget cut was committee decision. **PAGE 3**

Local

Manta Band's budget shortfall narrows to $15,000

»Bowling tournament this weekend for last-minute fundraiser

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Saipan Southern High School Manta Band musical director Will DeWitt, third from left, receives from officials of the Saipan Rotary Club the $1,000 check donation for the group's trip to the London Olympics next week.

Saipan Southern High School's Manta Band members are getting closer to their dream of performing at the London Olympics following the announcement yesterday that the group was able to close their budget gap from $90,000 last month to only $15,000 yesterday.

Will DeWitt, the Manta Band's music director, made the announcement yesterday after receiving from the Saipan Rotary Club a $1,000 donation for their trip to the Summer Olympics next week.

"We're very happy to report that we closed that gap with your help and narrowed it from $90,000 to $15,000 as of this moment and we could have not done it without your generosity and the outpouring support from the community," said DeWitt.

He said the band has enjoyed a long history of collaboration with the Saipan Rotary Club, which donated the band's musical equipment about seven years ago. He said these precious equipment were instrumental in honing and developing the skills of band members. He estimates that over 200 students benefit from the band instruments each year.

DeWitt told reporters that the local musicians will be performing in four different events during the Olympics. These include performances at Westminster Abbey, Queen Elizabeth's Conference Center, at a torch ceremony in Central London, and the bonus show at the Olympic Park.

The band needs $250,000 for the two-week trip to London. Since last year, band members have been busy doing fundraisers and concerts to raise the needed cash. As a last-minute fundraiser, members will hold a bowling tournament this weekend at SPC Bowling Center in Garapan from 9:30am on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are prized at $25 for three games, according to DeWitt. The group is also continuing its flame tree planting activity and seeks educational tax credit donations from the private sector.

DeWitt, along with band president Ken Orejola and vice president Steve Park, expressed their gratitude for the Rotarians' donations and mentioned that many other donors have greatly helped their fundraising efforts.

DeWitt shared yesterday the touching gesture of a businessman who, despite the financial challenges in his own company, made a donation to the group.

"He took a loan to donate to the band because he believes in the band. These are stories that really make us feel grateful, but also put a little pressure on us to do really well and we believe we will, because we got fantastic students!" he told Rotarians.

Musically speaking, the band is all set to go, DeWitt said. The group is just putting finishing touches on their music and repertoire.

The band is scheduled to fly to London early morning of July 23.

"We're very excited and very honored. At this point in time, it all seems like a dream but we're preparing because we know it's now a reality," he said.

Rotary Club president Pete Shilling said the Rotarians are delighted to make the donation to the Manta Band. He said it's really gratifying to see the members fundraising by actually doing something and giving something in return for the monetary support they receive. Shilling said this demonstrates the amount of efforts the members put into their trip.

If any individual or business would like to add their name to the band's growing list of supporters, contact Will DeWitt at 989-6987 or willdewitt69@gmail.com.

King files candidacy for education board

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The incumbent vice chairwoman of the CNMI State Board of Education, Tanya Denise King, filed her petition for candidacy at the Commonwealth Election Commission yesterday, making her the second individual to seek a post with the board.

King was elected in 2007; her term will expire in January 2013. She is now seeking re-election for another four-year term to represent Rota on the board.

Besides King, two other slots are up for grabs this midterm polls, including that of chairwoman Mary Lou Ada and member Galvin Deleon Guerrero, both representing Saipan.

King has been involved in education for 22 years and served the system for about 17 years. Besides being a former teacher and guidance counselor, King also worked as an accreditation coordinator and visited 10 schools throughout the Pacific Region.

With her deep understanding about the school system and the continuing improvements it needs, King is convinced that she can be an asset to the board and would bring much to the table.

When asked about the major accomplishments and legacies of her first term, King was quick to point out that the board—of which she is a part of—brought "equity, transparency, and accountability" to the system.

She cited as accomplishments the passage of policies that bring progress and improvement to the system in general. Among these are the implementation of the full-day kindergarten program in schools and the expected approval of a new sick leave donation policy.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Commonwealth Election Commission administrative officer Julita Villagomez checks the documents submitted by Tanya King yesterday as she files her petition for candidacy. King, the incumbent vice chair of the State Board of Education, is seeking re-election this year.

King disclosed that Rota was among the first schools that successfully enforced the full-day kindergarten program.

King's endorsement of the new sick leave donation was also described as noteworthy. It allows sick PSS personnel to avail of sick leave donations from peers when they need to seek medical treatment outside the Commonwealth. From the 160 hours of sick leave currently allowed employees, the new policy endorses up to 480 hours of sick leave donations. King said this will bring nothing but positive results to the system, with loyal and productive employees at all levels. King revealed that she worked and lobbied for the proposal for seven months before it was adopted by the committee. This policy is expected to be approved by the full board in today's meeting.

Also among King's top goals is the continued transparency and accountability at the system as well as the importance of building local capacity. King wants to bring equal educational opportunities to Saipan, Rota and Tinian students. She said she will encourage more online and technical vocational programs for the two islands so they can also be provided equitable educational opportunities like their counterparts on Saipan.

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Basa: Tinian budget cut was committee decision

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

In a retort to Tinian Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz singling him out as responsible for cutting Tinian's budget, Rep. Ramon S. Basa (Cov-Saipan) said the decision to slash the island's appropriation was made by the entire House Way and Means Committee.

Basa

"For the mayor to come out and say that I did it alone and that I took away their funding, that's unfounded. It's the committee that decided and I don't vote alone. This is a democratic process and we're not in a communist country," said Basa in an interview with the *Saipan Tribune*.

"People should understand that, although I'm the chairman, any decision that has to be made is a collective decision and not just mine. That needs to be cleared," he added.

Under the 36-page House Bill 17-313 prefiled last July 11, Tinian was allocated $4.566 million or $471,093 less than the $5.037 million originally earmarked by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial in his $114-million budget submission to the House of Representatives.

Although Basa is the main author of the House budget bill, he said the decision to reallocate the close to half a million dollars taken from Tinian and spread it out to agencies in more dire need was decided by all 12 members of the House and Ways Committee.

Aside from Basa, other members of the committee are Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan), Rep. George Camacho (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian), Rep. Fredrick Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Rafael Demapan Jr. (Cov-Saipan), Rep. Sylvestre Iguel (Cov-Saipan), Rep. Janet Maratita (R-Saipan), Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan), Rep. Raymond Palacios (Cov-Saipan), Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), and Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan).

Although he applauds Dela Cruz for his work to improve the tourism industry on Tinian, Basa said he didn't see any concrete plans to support giving Tinian additional funds.

"If they say they're in need of additional money to improve their tourism industry, then maybe that's something that needs to be put on the table," he said.

On the matter of the Marianas Visitors Authority receiving less funding for fiscal year 2013, Basa said this is because the tourism body stands to get additional funding from the so-called $15 hotel tax.

"There's the hotel tax [environmental promotional fee] that we're going to charge…that money will go to MVA for their purposes. That revenue is going strictly to MVA for promotional, destination enhancement, clean up our tourist sites, provide security and safety," he said.

Under the House's proposed budget bill, MVA will get only $1.575 million, $550,000 less than the $2.125 million originally set aside by the Executive Branch.

Woman acquitted of assault charges

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho has acquitted a woman of charges that she assaulted the sister of her former live-in partner and resisted arrest.

In a bench trial on Monday, Camacho found Kristy Diana Halstead not guilty of assault and battery and disturbing the peace.

Camacho also granted defense attorney Michael Norita Evangelista's motion for acquittal on a charge of resisting arrest after assistant attorney general Darren Robinson rested the government's case.

The judge agreed with Evangelista that the prosecution did not present any evidence whatsoever that the 28-year-old Halstead resisted arrest.

The Office of the Attorney General alleged that, on Feb. 5, 2012, Halstead assaulted and disturbed the peace of Annette Basa and resisted when a police officer was trying to handcuff her.

Evangelista told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that his client is obviously very elated, having been cleared of all charges.

"Halstead can now move forward with her life without the cloud of uncertainty [that] had hung over her for the past five months," Evangelista said.

He said his client has maintained her innocence from the very beginning and that became very apparent from all the evidences presented at trial.

"We thank the court for its thoroughness in conducting this trial, and then assistant attorney general Robinson for his professionalism throughout this case," Evangelista said.

A police detective stated in his report that on Feb. 5 at 4:40pm a police officer responded to a residence in Afetnas after receiving a call about a disturbance.

The officer allegedly saw Halstead shouting at her former live-in partner at the driveway leading to the residence of Basa.

Basa tried to stop the commotion, but Halstead was allegedly persistent to get her hands on her former live-in partner.

The officer managed to reach Halstead before she entered Basa's residence. The defendant then allegedly resisted when the officer was restraining her.

Basa told police that her brother asked Halstead to move out from the house because they had a fight but she refused to leave.

Basa said she ended up getting scratches on her left and right arm when she tried to stop Halstead from pulling her brother's shirt. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Man in domestic violence case found guilty

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho convicted yesterday a man accused of pulling the hair of his common-law wife at their residence in Upper Miha.

Camacho found that the prosecution presented enough evidence to prove that Brandon Camacho Wanket committed the charges.

The judge found Wanket guilty of assault and battery, disturbing the peace, criminal mischief, interfering with a domestic violence report, and resisting arrest.

Wanket will be sentenced on Aug. 8, 2012, at 1:30pm.

Assistant attorney general Margo Brown prosecuted the case. Assistant public defender Matt Meyer served as counsel for Wanket.

Police detective Catherine B. Pangelinan stated in her report that police officers responded to Upper Miha on June 22, 2011, at 4:48am after receiving a call about a disturbance.

The officers saw the victim crying in the driveway. She told the police that Wanket pulled her hair, causing her to fall to the ground.

The officers spotted Wanket near the house. He was uncooperative when the officers tried to handcuff him. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

US Army Reserve center to close road

The U.S. Army Reserve Center will be conducting an exercise on July 19-20, 2012, The road on the west of the U.S. Army Reserve Center will be closed and only authorized personnel with valid military identification cards will be allowed to enter the facility. ***(PR)***

Free Army Reserve Enrichment Camp

The Army Reserve's Child, Youth and School Services will host a free Youth Enrichment Camp on July 23-27, 2012, at Marianas Trekking for children ages 4 to 12. For more information contact Travis Mckinney at (808) 438-1600 Ext. 3374 or email travis.mckinney@us.army.mil, or Chris Nelson at 323-8735. ***(PR)***

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Villagomez says he will thumb down House budget bill

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Even as the House of Representatives is poised to vote on the fiscal year 2013 budget bill today, one ranking member of the chamber's leadership has already made known his dissatisfaction with the measure and urged his colleagues to study it carefully before voting on the bill.

Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Tourism and a member of the Ways and Means committee, said he is voting "no" to the $114-million general appropriations bill primarily because it is hinged on $12 million in additional government revenue he believes is too optimistic.

"Just over a week ago, on July 2, the governor proposed a revised budget that replaced his original April 1 submission. This revised budget increased the amount that he initially identified by $12 million. This revised budget from $102 million to $114 million has its pros and cons," said Villagomez in a letter addressed to acting speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) that was released to the media yesterday.

On the one hand, the Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's revised proposal effectively eliminates austerity measures as employees on a 64- or 72-hour work pay period will be able to earn up to 80 hours and paid holidays will be restored.

On the other hand, Villagomez said, the proposal effectively kills the NMI Retirement Fund's defined benefit contribution plan and moves every member of the plan to the U.S. Social Security System.

He said the governor's proposal, which the House has adopted, projects an increase in business gross revenue tax in what the Fitial administration is calling a very conservative $12 million.

"It is my understanding that the governor wants to take this conservative $12 million and use it to end austerity measures. Now, while I am in favor of ending austerity measures, I am concerned that this figure, this $12 million, may be too optimistic. Do we reasonably foresee a $12 million increase in BGRT and total revenue? And let's just say that this conservative projection is off by a few million, what happens to the people of the Commonwealth if austerity measures are re-implemented because the actual numbers fall short of the $12 million?" asked Villagomez.

The congressman also equates the passage of the Fitial administration budget bill as effectively telling the retirees that the CNMI will no longer fund the Fund's defined benefit plan.

"By passing this bill we are telling active members that they have no say and that Social Security is what they're going to get. But exactly what does this mean? Where are the other draft bills from the administration? Are we starting in the Social Security System from scratch or are we getting the option of a buyback? We have all heard the expression: Don't count your chickens before they hatch. With all due respect, we are counting the chickens not just before they hatch, we are counting them even before the eggs are laid."

Villagomez is also questioning the Executive Branch's calculation on the budget, given that when the budget was in excess of $120 million a couple of years back it didn't prevent the CNMI government from instituting austerity measures.

"Let's not forget that at $120 million plus we implemented austerity measures and cut the pay period down to 64 or 72 hours. But at $114 million, or $6 million dollars less, now we can afford 80 hours? Forgive me if I sound a bit skeptical, but as far as I can tell, our government has not shrunk that much and our actual revenues have not increased that much. I have been told that we need an estimated $7 million in revenue to eliminate austerity. So if our total budget went from $102 million in 2012 to $114 million projected today for FY 2013, it would appear that we have more than the $7 million that we need, right? I am not so sure."

ALIEN

From Page 1

This comes even as the plaintiffs in the lawsuit challenging the implementation and enforcement of the CNMI-only Transitional Workers Final Rule are inviting nonresident workers and other supporters to join their cause.

United Workers Movement NMI president Rabby Syed said his group hasn't decided yet whether to support or not Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and the Chamber's request to have the transition period extended to 2019.

"No official decision yet. We need more research on this issue. We want to ask the Chamber and the Fitial administration if they have a survey to back up their request for an extension. Also we want to see the CW process to run its course," said Syed in a telephone interview with the *Saipan Tribune*.

Syed also reiterated his group's request for improved status and a pathway to U.S. citizenship for long-term nonresident workers in the CNMI.

He said they will also request U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano to automatically extend humanitarian parole next year to those who have already been granted that status.

Dekada Movement Bonifacio Sagana said his group is in the same quandary as Syed's group in that they have yet to come up with an official position on the federalization transition's extension.

To be honest, Sagana said, the Dekada Movement is divided on the issue. He said members who have good jobs seem to favor an extension for the sake of their families, while those who don't have jobs and are only able to stay here because of humanitarian parole are against it.

For the latter, any extension in the transition period will only extend their hardship and misery, Sagana said. Rather than prolong the inevitable, members without jobs want to find out by 2014—and not 2019—whether there will be improved status or not so they can go on with their lives, he added.

Personally, Sagana is against any extension. He agrees with members that it will only prolong hardship, adding that everyone knows that a CW visa is a non-immigrant status so even if there's extension, there will be no improved status.

Former Rota teacher and human right activist Wendy Doromal is also opposed to the extension of the federal transition period.

"An extension of a program that had a shaky start, was and is uncoordinated, lacks adequate funding and personnel and has little congressional oversight would not serve the foreign workers, their employers, or the CNMI. The CNMI guest worker program is problematic and has not provided the smooth and orderly transition called for in the CNRA [Consolidated Natural Resources Act]," she said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Doromal added that there is absolutely no need to extend this program and that what is needed is a stable workforce that could only be ensured if U.S. Congress takes "the only right and humane step and grant permanent residency status to every legal, long-term foreign worker who has worked five or more continuous years in the CNMI."

She said granting permanent residency to qualified long-term foreign workers would end the uncertainty and confusion.

"It would end six more years of fees, the problems and delays with applications, the confusion with visas and travel, and the constant toying with people's lives, not to mention the expense of running the program.

"The CNRA calls for a reduction of the foreign work force to zero by 2014. I have always interpreted that to mean that by 2014 the U.S. Congress would have introduced and passed legislation to provide permanent residency status to the legal, long-term foreign workers, making a CNMI-only guest worker program virtually unnecessary. This is the only just and democratic solution. It is the only solution that reflects our American values," she said.

U.S. Public Law 110-229, also known as the Consolidated Natural Resources Act, provides for a transition period not to exceed Dec. 31, 2014, wherein all guest workers in the CNMI will be eliminated.

The law also provides that the U.S. Secretary of Labor will assess the CNMI's current and anticipated labor needs and determine whether an extension of up to five years is necessary to ensure an adequate number of workers will be available for businesses in the Commonwealth.

Wanted: Additional petitioners

In a mass email seeking additional petitioners, original petitioners Bonifacio V. Sagana, Manuel T. Vilaga, Gerardo G. De Guzman, Hector T. Sevilla, Carlito J. Marquez, Eduardo M. Elenzano, and Jong Ho Lee "is encouraging any individual, organizations, and businesses/businessman to join us in amending our lawsuit to make it stronger."

In their invitation, the original petitioners said the amendment for additional plaintiff is due for filing on or before Sept. 28, 2012.

NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona dismissed the original petitioner's lawsuit last May 31, but gave them until Sept. 28, 2012, to file an amended complaint.

SIMULATED

From Page 1

Seman said 15 agencies, including the Guam National Guard, Hawaii National Guard, and Arizona National Guard, are participating in the biggest KONFITMA exercise in the Commonwealth so far.

The purpose of KONFITMA is to conduct an all-hazard situational training exercise in order to create conditions to reinforce interoperability among local, state, federal, military, and private stakeholders.

The U.S. Army Pacific Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team/CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package Training and Readiness Division, in coordination with the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and the Emergency Management Office, is holding the exercise together with CNMI and federal responders.

The scenarios occurred simultaneously at 8am on Saipan and Tinian.

In the Saipan scenario, an explosion at a pipeline near the seaport caused fire at a barge. As a result, oil was released to the water. Several law enforcers and emergency providers immediately responded to Baker Dock. After over an hour, the area was cleared.

Emergency responders then proceeded to Palms Resort where a shooting incident was happening.

Members of the Department of Public Safety's Tactical Response Team evacuated guests and hotel staff, even as some people were being held hostage.

Firefighters then discover that some men were trying to steal the ammonia chemical stored in an inaccessible area of the hotel.

At least three "injured" women were taken from the hotel, put on stretchers and transported by ambulance to the Commonwealth Health Center.

As some "injured persons" were found in an "inaccessible area" on the ground floor of the hotel, firefighters hoisted them up one by one some 65 feet above the building.

At the former La Fiesta Mall, TRET members responded and engaged in a shootout against five suspected terrorists.

Seman said five suspects were shot dead and two others were wounded. Seman said he could not say yet whether any law enforcer was shot.

Saipan Tribune, however, observed one TRET member and the TRET commander himself, Capt. Pete Leon Guerrero, actually hit by gunshots (paintballs).

Leon Guerrero suffered a real cut on the right palm as he accidentally touched a sharp object when one "terrorist" suddenly appeared from nowhere and opened fire. Leon Guerrero was heard complaining that the open fire was not part of the rule as it was already outside the building.

After a brief shooting with TRET members, the suspects were neutralized and taken to the police station.

Two officers were taken to CHC after being exposed to hazardous chemicals.

The building was also found to have a laboratory of hazardous chemicals.

On Tinian, two packages containing explosives were found. One was in front of the police station, while the other was at the power plant.

Seman said they called the Guam National Guard for assistance at 9am.

Later, about eight to 10 responders from Saipan boarded a helicopter and flew to Tinian. One rescue boat was also dispatched to the island.

LAS VEGAS

From Page 1

$30,000 gross proceeds.

Dave Sablan also said that Saturday night's turnout was the biggest he has ever seen in the 27 years of the club's history.

This year's Las Vegas Night was attended by about a thousand-plus players and guests.

During the club's weekly meeting at Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday, club president Pete Shilling acknowledged each and every member and volunteers who "all did a perfect job" despite the overwhelming crowd throughout the night. Special thanks were also conveyed to each member of the community who supported the Las Vegas Night fundraiser despite the economic challenges and to the Saipan World Resort for hosting the event.

Glen Perez reported that of the club's 39 members, majority or 32 were present last Saturday.

This year's proceeds will be used to build a children's park in Kagman village, which is expected to begin work this year.

Las Vegas Night winners will be presented their prizes next week.

Ariel Capati, this year's grand prize winner, will be made to choose between $10,000 cash prize and a brand new 2012 Hyundai Accent GLS.

Other winners are Romana Emmeti, who won the $3,000 cash prize; Reynaldo Pulido, $2,000 cash prize; Mike Cruz, $1,000 cash prize; and Leonora Bengco, $500 cash prize.

Las Vegas Night, the club's major fundraiser every year, aims to raise funds for the organization's various community projects. This year's edition featured tables crammed with players eager to lay bets on Texas Hold'em, Black Jack, Roulette, Bingo, and Craps.

'Only payment of arrears can solve CUC crises'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

One surefire way to help the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. solve its cash-flow problems is for the central government to pay its arrears with the struggling utilities firm, according to Senate President Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota).

In a phone interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Manglona said the latest emergency declaration at CUC is justified but can actually be solved in the long run if government agencies and departments pay their billings in a timely manner.

"All they need is payment from the departments and agencies. If they get the utility billings paid I think they can get out of the state of emergency. It's a cash flow issue," he said.

In his July 16 emergency declaration, acting governor Eloy S. Inos stated that CUC's cash crisis is primarily caused by the $12 million owed it by the Public School System, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and residential consumers. CUC also owes its vendors $2.6 million. Inos also cited the dearth of U.S. workers with technical training, existing renewable energy crisis, and lack of a CUC board of directors.

Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb (R-Saipan) said he agrees with the acting governor's decision to extend the state of emergency at CUC for another 30 days.

"I haven't really looked at it but basically its an extension because of the lack of manpower at CUC and that there's not enough cash flow going into that agency to meet its obligation. At the same time you have the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] and its deadlines. For me that's the priority and the emergency declaration is within that scope," he said.

Rep. Ramon S. Basa (Cov-Saipan), meanwhile, said it only makes sense to extend the emergency declaration at CUC in view of the recent decreases in power and water and wastewater prices.

He said the Executive Branch appears to be doing a good job at CUC and he has no qualms of having the declaration extended for another month.

Basa, however, will have an issue if the emergency declaration becomes a familiar theme at the embattled utilities firm and said he hopes that a CUC board of directors would soon be put in place.

Manglona echoed Basa's concerns about the lack of a CUC board of directors.

"The lack of a board is something we've raised for the past years. The law requires that CUC should have a board of directors. Until now they [Executive Brancg] have put that aside and it seems they have no interest in doing that. They choose not to do it. There's no willingness to set up a board of directors," he said.

Manglona also urged the Marianas Public Land Trust to release the $7 million loan to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. because part of the funds being borrowed will be used to pay off the latter's outstanding arrears at CUC.

"That's why in our meeting last week with CUC and the [Office of the Attorney General], one of the questions asked Attorney General Ed Buckingham was what was holding out the MPLT loan to CHC because on that loan is a couple of million dollars that could pay for their arrears," he said.

CUC was first placed under emergency status on Aug. 1, 2008, and that was lifted only on March 28, 2011.

The latest emergency declaration for CUC was announced last May 18 and it was renewed a month later, making Inos' latest declaration the second renewal for the utilities firm.

Learning service program launched at Mount Carmel

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Mount Carmel School president Galvin Deleon Guerrero speaks before members of the Saipan Rotary Club at Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday. Also in photo are Rotary Club president Pete Shilling, left, and vice president Laila Boyer, right.

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Mount Carmel School students from seventh to twelfth graders will soon have the opportunity to serve their community and develop a better understanding of it after the institution launched yesterday a new service learning program that will be tied to formal instruction for better results.

Mount Carmel president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, who was the guest speaker at the Saipan Rotary Club meeting yesterday, asked Rotarians for their help not only in providing community project ideas but also some sort of mentoring to students so they could learn from the club members' experiences and insights.

The community service will be required under the students' Theology program.

Deleon Guerrero believes that by making the students more involved in the community, they will gain a deeper understanding of what service learning is all about.

As defined by the Community Service Act of 1990, service learning is a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community.

Deleon Guerrero shared that during his college days, he was recruited for one week to do community service for Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit organization that builds houses for homeless people. That experience, he said, gave him a deeper understanding of the importance of serving the community.

"From that point in time forward, I knew that when we give to our community, we gain so much more out of it in terms of understanding people better," he said.

Deleon Guerrero said he firmly believes that "service without learning is just charity and learning without service is just knowledge. Service with learning, however, is wisdom that comes from experience and understanding."

He said he wants Mount Carmel students, in partnership with Rotary Club, to be on the "frontline" in helping the community.

2012 DISCONNECTION DATES

IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of these business days

January 20 • February 27 • March 20
April 20 • May 23 • June 20 • July 20
August 22 • September 20 • October 24
November 21 • December 20

will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on these days. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before these dates.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION IT&E CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE

You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than **these dates**. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

If you have questions regarding billing or service, Please call Customer Service at **682-4ITE (4483)** or Visit any IT&E CS Center nearest you.

IT&E Life in Motion

To avoid disconnection you may pay your IT&E bill at any location below:

SHELL Service Stations – up to 4:00pm
Chalan Laulau/Tinian/Rota Office– up to 4:30pm
TSL Plaza – up to 6:00pm
Online payment – up to 9:00pm

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Office of the Secretary
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950
Tel. (670) 664-2587 Fax (670) 664-2547

CHILD CARE PROGRAM
OPENS FOR NEW APPLICANTS

To: All parents and/or Legal Guardians:

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Child Care Program will be doing pre-eligibility assessments for new applicants. The program will open to a maximum of 100 children or slots only (CNMI wide). **For this opening, parents who are attending school, training or working will be accommodated**. Once all slots have been taken, pre-eligibility assessments will cease and applications will no longer be provided.

Pre-eligibility assessments will be done at the following locations, date, and time.

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Multipurpose Hall, Susupe	Tuesday, July 24, 2012	3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Rota	Wednesday, July 25, 2012	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Tinian	Wednesday, August 1, 2012	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Parents and/or legal guardians who are interested in applying for the program must go through the pre-eligibility process and will need to bring the following:

Three (3) latest checkstubs showing the applicant's name, hours worked (at least 60 hours bi-weekly), hourly rate, and gross monthly earnings (both parents)
Most recent 1040 tax – for the year 2011 (both parents)
School documents (class schedule, must be full time 12 credit)
Training schedule (must have at least 60 training hours bi-weekly)

Interested applicants must bring the above documents to be entertained for pre-eligibility.

The Child Care Program Office will accept completed applications beginning August 7, 2012 between 1:00p.m. to 4:00p.m. and the last day to submit applications will be August 13, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Completed applications along with the required documents should be forwarded to the Child Care Program Office Building No. 1347 Ascension Court Capitol Hill. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

For questions regarding the Child Care Program please call at 664-2575/2546/2587.

Requirements:
Applicant of Household
Check stubs for the most recent three pay periods for each parent or guardian
A copy of Identification Card for each parent or guardian (Passport, CNMI driver's license, Mayor's ID Card or entry permit)
A copy of your most recent 1040 Tax for the year 2011 (each parent or guardian)
Residency: The applicant or guardian must be living in the CNMI
Provide one of the following documents
House Rental/ Mortgage
Utility Receipt
Telephone Receipt
Entry Permit
Employment verification (CCDF Form)
Child support statement/stub
Training/Education Verification and class schedules
If single parent/guardian in a household provide notarized affidavit
Must have CW1 documentation (if applicable)
Must have completed USCIS Biometrics (if applicable)

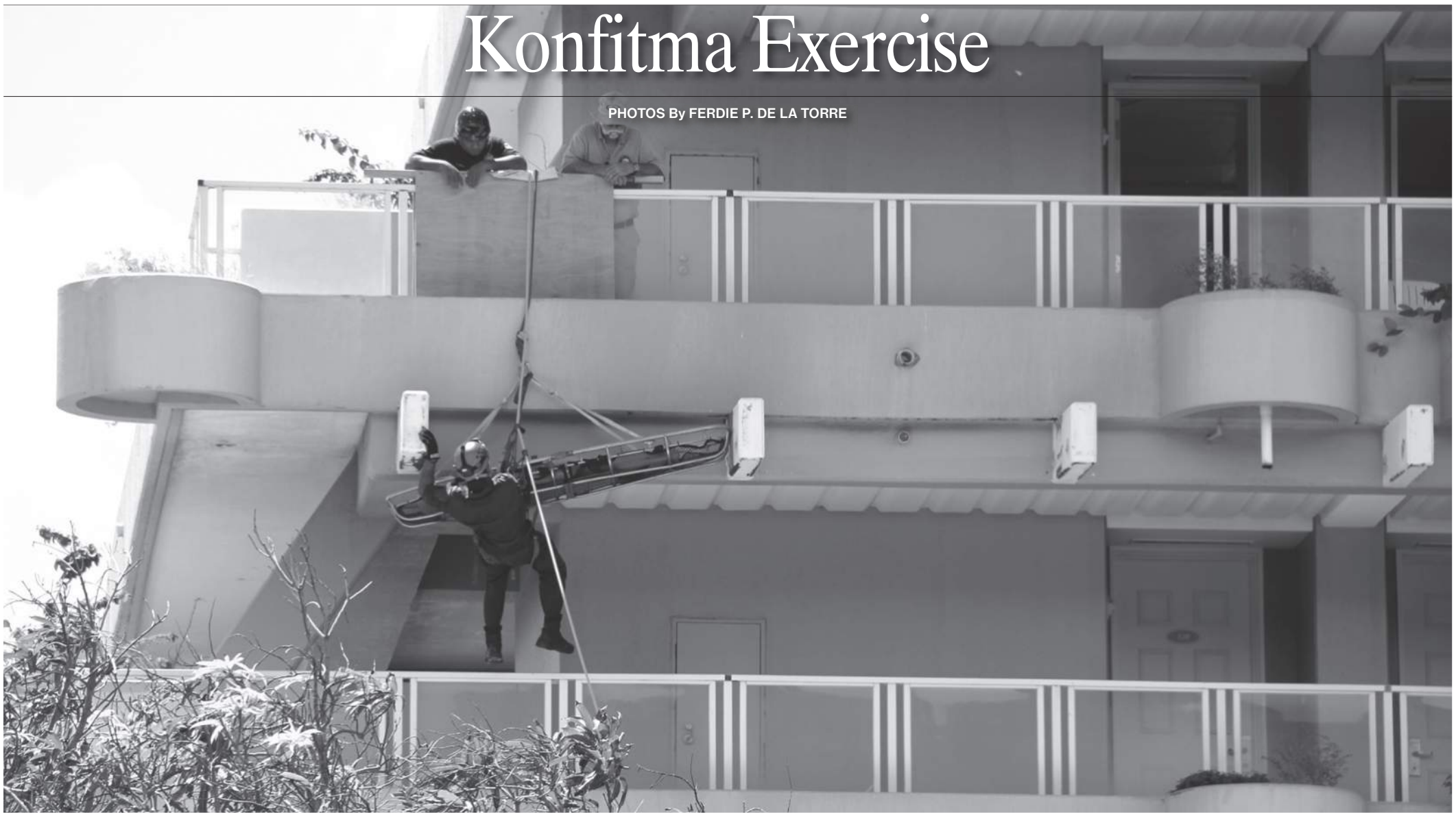
Child/Children Household member:
A copy of Birth Certificate for each child (Child must be a US citizen or a qualified alien, as defined in Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA)
A copy of US Passport
A copy of Social Security Card

Approved for distribution: /s/Melvin L.O. Faisao, DCCA Secretary — Date: July 05, 2012

Funding from the Office of Child Care, US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Konfitma Exercise

PHOTOS By FERDIE P. DE LA TORRE



Firefighters hoist up from 65 feet below an "injured person" who was found in an "inaccessible area" located at Palms Resort Saipan.

Emergency vehicles occupy the southbound lane of the highway in front of Palms Resort Saipan where law enforcers responded to a "shooting incident."

Emergency providers attend to three "injured women" who were rescued from Palms Resort.

Medics ready to put one of the "injured women" into an ambulance.

Department of Public Safety Fire Division's Lt. Jesse C. Mesa conducts briefing to firefighters in front of Palms Resort Saipan.

A member of Tactical Response Enforcement Team runs downstairs of the defunct La Fiesta Mall after they successfully "neutralized" a "group of terrorists."

A TRET member escorts one of the arrested "terrorists" during a shootout at the defunct La Fiesta Mall.

A TRET member readies his gun during their "encounter" with a "group of terrorists" at the former La Fiesta building.

8 candidates have so far filed petitions for November polls

»2 legislative initiatives turned in to CEC

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Eight individuals have so far filed their petitions for candidacy with the Commonwealth Election Commission while two legislative initiatives have been turned in for this November's midterm election.

Records from the agency show that five individuals have filed candidacies for House seats in various precincts, two filed for board of education posts, and only one has so far filed a petition for candidacy for U.S. delegate.

The five aspiring representatives are Ignacio V. Cabrera, who will run for a seat in Precinct 3; Eric Frank D. Diaz, for Precinct 2; John Paul P. Sablan, for Precinct 2; Rafael S. Demapan, for Precinct 2; and Mariano DLG. Fajardo, who will run for a House seat in Precinct 3.

For the Board of Education, Victorino S. Cepeda filed a petition on July 9 while Tanya King filed yesterday. Cepeda will run for Saipan while King is seeking re-election for Rota.

Incumbent Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan is so far the only filer at the moment for the U.S. delegate position.

Deadline for the filing of candidacies and legislative initiatives is on or before Aug. 8.

CEC executive director Robert Guerrero disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* that two legislative initiatives have been turned in to the commission for the November ballots. These are House Legislative Initiative 17-2, which seeks to make the attorney general position an elected one; and Senate Legislative Initiative 17-12, which seeks to amend Article 15 Section 2 (b) of the NMI Constitution authorizing the Northern Marianas College's Board of Regents to revise NMC's mission statement.

The CNMI midterm election is on Nov. 6 this year. The following positions are up for grabs: 20 seats at the House of Representatives; three seats at the Senate; three seats at the Board of Education; all municipal councils positions; and one position for U.S. delegate to the U.S. Congress.

Guerrero said yesterday that based on previous elections' trends, most candidates will file their petitions the week before Aug. 8. He expects an influx of filers during the same period.

Guerrero said the commission expects to certify candidates a week after the filing deadline. At present, he said the agency is doing the continuing registration of voters and preparing election files and other documents for the midterm poll.

The commission had already identified and approved the 13 official polling places for the midterm election.

These various polling stations for each precinct level include the Hopwood Junior High School, Dandan Elementary School, and Koblerville Youth Center for Precinct 1 voters. This precinct covers registrants from San Antonio, San Vicente, and Koblerville.

For Precinct 2 voters, which included registrants from Chalan Kanoa and Susupe, the official polling station is the Joeten Kiyu Public Library, while the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium and the Garapan Elementary School's northern side will accommodate Precinct 3 voters from the areas of Oleai and Garapan.

For Precinct 4 voters, the official polling stations are the Tanapag Youth Center, the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, Jesus P. Mafnas Legislative Building, and the Northern Islands. Precinct 4 voters are from Tanapag, San Roque, Capitol Hill, and the Northern Islands.

The Kagman Community Center will be the official polling site for voters in Precinct 5, covering residents of Kagman while Tinian Elementary School remains the official polling station for Precinct 6.

On Rota, the Northern Marianas College campus will accommodate voters on the island.

NEW FEATURES CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The newly renamed and renovated Kanoa Resort Saipan boasts of well over $1 million worth of upgrades. Formerly the Saipan Grand Hotel, Kanoa Resort Saipan features spanking new fixtures, carpeting, newly painted walls, and breathtaking ocean views. The resort has a gamut of amenities including the marine-inspired interior of Nami Lounge (once the Southern Cross), which has a state-of-the-art sound system, two swimming pools, a new chapel, Barefoot Beach Bar & BBQ, and the Isla Café, which offers indoor and outdoor dining options for hotel guests.

First Micronesian NGO eligible for Combined Federal Campaign

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A recent announcement by the US Office of Personnel Management allows the Micronesia Conservation Trust admittance to participate in the fiscal year 2012 Combined Federal Campaign, or CFC. The CFC is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the federal workplace and raises millions of dollars annually through national and international campaigns. The Micronesian Conversation Trust is the first Micronesian non-governmental organization to be included in the Combined Federal Campaign Charity List.

"OPM's announcement is great news and I commend MCT's leadership for their mission and for their work to be included in the CFC. For the past two years, my office has worked on an initiative to strengthen the non-governmental organizations in Micronesia and the Caribbean. NGO's are part of an important and growing sector that are providing necessary environmental, health, youth, and social services with very limited resources," said Tony Babauta, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas.

The MCT supports biodiversity conservation and related sustainable development for the people of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the U.S. territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It is a major partner in the Micronesia Challenge, which has the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of the near-shore marine resources and 20 percent of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020.

Babauta wrote to the Joint Region Mariana's Command informing Rear Adm. Paul J. Bushong of the great news that on June 14, 2012, the first local Micronesian NGO was included in the CFC's Charity List by the Office of Personnel Management.

"With its inclusion in the CFC, MCT is now eligible to receive pledges from the many federal employees and military personnel who are from the region, currently stationed there, or have an interest in the insular areas. I highly encourage other NGO's in the insular areas to explore their eligibility for the CFC as well," added Babauta.

For those interested in making donations, MCT will be listed in the CFC Charity List under the national/international independent agencies under the number 79910. The CFC season runs from Sept. 1 to Dec. 15. ***(DOI)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-12-020

SUPPLY & DELIVERY PREPAID METERS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Supply and Delivery of Remote Disconnect Prepaid Meters for CUC Power Division, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash or check, in the amount of $100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-12-020, Supply & Delivery of Remote Disconnect Prepaid Meters"*, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM, (ChST) on July 24, 2012** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. A copy of the entire submission is also required to be sent by email to Janina Muna, Procurement & Supply Administrative Assistant via email address mika.muna@cucgov.org or alternately include a CD with each copy of the submission. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract.

The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All inquiries must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on **July 20, 2012** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email-manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Alfredo Palattao, Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Ms. Janina Mika Muna, Admin. Support Assistant, Procurement & Supply – mika.muna@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

/S/ ALAN W. FLETCHER
Acting Executive Director

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-12-022

SUPPLY OF FUEL FOR LIGHT VEHICLE AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms to supply fuel for CUC's light vehicle and heavy equipment on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash or check, in the amount of $100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-12-022, Supply of Fuel for Light Vehicle & Heavy Equipment", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM, (ChST) on August 14, 2012** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. A copy of the entire submission is also required to be sent by email to Janina Muna, Procurement & Supply Administrative Assistant via email address mika.muna@cucgov.org or alternately include a CD with each copy of the submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for services.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations. CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and wave any imperfection in the bid proposal in the interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

All inquires must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on **July 23, 2012** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email-manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Janina Mika Muna, Admin. Support Assistant, Procurement & Supply – mika.muna@cucgov.org

/s/ ALAN W. FLETCHER
Acting Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. Box 501370
SAIPAN, MP 96950

Head Start Policy Council Agenda

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Head Start Policy Council hereby gives notice that it will have a Regular meeting on Friday, July 20, 2012 at 9:00 a.m., Tanapag Head Start Resource Center, Saipan.

I. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Quorum
4. Adoption of Agenda
5. Adoption of Minutes:
   a. May 11, 2012

II. Public Comments

III. Communication
1. From the State Board of Education
2. From the Office of Head Start

IV. Monthly Reports
1. Director
2. Managers
3. Finance Director
4. Center Representatives

V. Old Business
1. FY 2013 Triennial Review (Monitoring Protocol)
2. Staff Qualification Updates
3. SY 2012-2013 Staff Pattern
4. Dental Service Contract (RFP PSS 12-018)
5. Annual HI-OP Training (June 25-29, 2012), Grantee Action Plan—School Readiness
6. SY 2012-2013 School Calendar Updates

VI. New Business
1. SY 2011-2012 Head Start Annual Report
2. SY 2011-2012 Program Information Report (PIR)
3. Spring 2012 Child Outcomes Report Data
4. SY 2012-2013 Program Calendar
5. SY 2011-2012 CLASS Observation Report Data
6. FY 2012-2013 Grant Application OHS Review & Program Response
7. Program Long Range Goals

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

VIII. Executive Session

IX. Next Meeting

X. Adjournment

This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome to attend. Any person(s) requiring special accommodations may contact Ms. Annie Santos at (670) 664-3751/3761 or email address at ana.santos@cnmipss.org: several days notice is required.

/s/ Vinson F. Sablan
Chairperson

LaoLao Bay resort offers discounted rates for TOC

»Reduced green fees for Guam residents

In anticipation of the upcoming 17th Annual Tournament of Champions on Aug. 4 and 5, the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort, host of the two-day event, is offering exclusive discount rates on its green fees and hotel rates.

"We're extremely pleased to be providing reduced prices for the participants of the Tournament of Champions," said LaoLao Bay Golf Resort senior vice president/general manager Tetsuya Matsunaga. "The event plays an important role in raising funds for critical community projects, and we are glad to contribute in any way we can to this worthy cause."

Saipan Laolao Bay Golf Resort. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Laolao Bay Golf Resort is offering a discounted rate of $100 (plus 10 percent) per night or $240 (plus 10 percent) for three nights in its "Ocean Bay" room. The two-bedroom suite, which is more than twice as large, has been discounted to $200 (plus 10 percent) per night or $480 (plus 10 percent) for three nights. The prices include Continental breakfast.

Additionally, the Laolao Bay Golf Resort will be offering discounted green fees for Guam residents from July 29, 2012, to Aug. 6, 2012. The fees have been lowered to match fees paid by CNMI residents.

The 17th Annual Tournament of Champions will be played at LaoLao Bay Golf Resort's east and west courses. The two-day event is bigger and better than ever with exciting hole in one prizes, and the chance to walk off with thousands of dollars in prizes. The TOC tournament fee is $175.

"We want our regular players to know we appreciate their support for TOC, and hope that new players will be encouraged to join," said tournament director Ben Babauta. "The fee includes two days of golf and the awards banquet, which will be held on Sunday at LaoLao Bay's The Grill Restaurant immediately following the tournament."

First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior and Super Senior Flights will each receive $500 cash, $400 for second, $300 for third, a digital camera to fourth, and $100 DFS gift certificate for fifth place.

The Ladies Low Gross champion will receive $500, $400 for second, and $300 for third place. The Ladies Low Net first through third places will receive a trophy.

Over $300,000 worth of prizes are at stake in the two-day tournament, including hole-in-one prizes worth $50,000 on both the east and west course courtesy of AON. Other hole-in-one prizes include two brand new cars from Triple J Motors and Microl Toyota. In addition, one year of free golf at LaoLao Bay on hole no 6 – East and $1,000 will be awarded to closest to the pin winners on hole 15 – East.

Since its inception, TOC has given over $500,000 to the Saipan Beautification Fund, which has gone directly to the improvements of the tree-lined traffic medians that stretch from Garapan to the former Palm Resort, as well as the revitalization of the Garapan special district. In addition, TOC also contributed funds for the Paseo de Marianas, the lighting of the Saipan Beach Pathway, and most recently the beatification of the Port to Park pathway.

"We are proud of our continued commitment to enhance the beauty of Saipan for our tourists and residents." Babauta said. "It is the generous support of our golfers, sponsors, and committee members that makes this event possible."

This year's TOC is supported by Platinum sponsors DFS Galleria, Marianas Visitors Authority, and LaoLao Bay Golf Resort.

Gold sponsors include Aon Insurance, DoCoMo Pacific, Microl, Y's Enterprises, Nike Golf, Triple J Motors, Delta Airlines, Chivas Regal, and Tan Holdings. Empress has signed on to become a silver sponsor, while Asiana Airlines, Rota Water, Hana Tour, Chanel, Beach Gal, Noni, BFJ Corp., Organic Natural Gift, and Stella Catering are bronze sponsors.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities for the 2012 TOC, contact Ben Babauta at 483-2563. ***(PR)***

Babauta tours UOG sustainability model home

MANGILAO, Guam—Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Tony M. Babauta of the U.S. Department of the Interior visited the University of Guam's Center for Island Sustainability Model Home yesterday to learn more about its energy efficient features and the University's Green Initiative. The model home is located at House No. 32 Dean's Circle at the UOG campus.

Originally built in the 1960s, the CIS Model Home has been retrofitted as a model for zero-carbon emission and full island sustainability. The house features a sustainable garden, a water catchment system, high efficiency windows, energy-efficient air conditioners, and a 6-kilowatt photovoltaic system. The model home's power meter runs backwards due to the minuscule amount of power used with monthly power bills as low as $9 per month.

"I wish to commend the University of Guam, President Underwood and the faculty and students for being real pioneers and creative thinkers. Going and being 'green' is much about developing a mindset and trend others seek to emulate. The CIS Model Home features state of the art concepts and cutting edge technology that speak to the very essence of sustainability and environmental consciousness. This home is a remarkable achievement and truly a building model for conserving and protecting our natural resources," said Babauta.

The Center for Island Sustainability Model Home is open to the public and anyone interested may ask for a tour of the house and is open from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

The goal of UOG Green is to develop a sustainable campus environment that can serve as a model for our island and the region. Visit the UOG Green web page at www.uog.edu/uog-green. ***(UOG)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy 31st birthday to Jasmin Dizon, who is celebrating her special day today! Wishing you good health, happiness and success in all your dreams. May God continue to guide you and bless you! We love you! Greetings come from your friends.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 75th birthday to Martha T. Bantolino, who is celebrating her special day today, July 18,2012! May you have many more birthdays to come, enjoy your special day, and we love you. Greetings come from your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, Masga-Sablan, friends and family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 18th birthday to Russell "Russ" Hocog, who celebrates his birthday today, July 18! May you have an awesomely great and fantastic one, and may you be blessed with many more birthdays to come! Love always, your family, friends, KHS 2K13 crew, and most especially your Nino Charisma.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings go out to Michael Jr. G. Camacho! May God bless you today, tomorrow, and always. You are growing quickly but forever you will be our little man. May your day be filled with lots of blessings, love, and more wonderful birthdays to come! Love always, Mommy, Daddy, your three sisters, and your loving families.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 5th birthday to Mai Janae Sakai Peters aka "Maimai," who is celebrating her birthday today, July 18! May you be blessed with many more birthdays to come and still remain the lovable and darling sweetheart that you are! Much hugs and kisses coming from your three brothers, mommy, daddy, your entire family, and most especially from your Nino Charisma!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

July 18, 2000

PDO lobbies for more federal funding

In a move to improve the quality of criminal defense for the poor, Chief Public Defender Masood Karimipour has asked U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno for more federal grants for the CNMI to help indigent clients. Mr. Karimipour met with Ms. Reno during a recent trip to Washington D.C. where he attended a National Symposium on Indigent Defense sponsored by the federal government. The meeting, attended by public defenders, judges and policy makers from all 50 states, was designed to attract leaders in the indigent defense area and other decision makers in the criminal justice systems who are committed to improving the system for the poor.

DPS scrambling for funds to meet court order

Faced with dwindling funds for its operation, the Department of Public Safety has started identifying areas where it can further carry out cuts to meet the Superior Court's deadline for the renovation of the Division of Corrections for mentally-ill inmates and detainees. DPS Commissioner Charles W. Ingram, however, said he could not further reduce the budget for operations just to accommodate the expenses for the improvement of the prison. "We cannot touch the money for operations because we have to make sure that the patrol cars are running 24 hours a day," he said.

July 18, 2001

CNMI gets $500K in new investments

Two new foreign investors infused $500,000 into the local economy during the first quarter of the year, according to the Department of Commerce. Chinese wholesale firm, Luen Fung Enterprises, and Egyptian construction company, Pyramid Construction, each plunked down at least $250,000 during the first three months of the year. Last year, the CNMI approved only three foreign investment applications, involving $750,000 in capital. The Department assesses a $100,000 security deposit and requires new companies an investment threshold of at least $150,000, which makes any new investor automatically cough up at least $250,000 to do business in the Commonwealth.

Principals told: Keep students' grades private

It came as a surprise to some public school principals that few of the practices they have employed in handling students' grades or records are actually against federal laws governing students' privacy rights. After being briefed on the confidentiality of students' school records during an Administrator's Summer Institute session this week, principals admitted they would have to revisit the policies and update their staff on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. For his part, Dandan Elementary School Principal Jonas Barcinas is now torn between giving publicized recognition to his most outstanding students and respecting their right to privacy.

July 18, 2002

Airport to lose 20 percent revenue

Revenue of the airport division is projected to decrease by 20 percent by the end of Fiscal Year 2002, a trend that started in the first six months of the current financial year. Based on the assumptions and footnotes submitted by the Commonwealth Ports Authority on the airport division, passenger traffic and activities are assumed to slide by 20 percent in the last six months ending September 30, 2002. To meet the Debt Service Coverage Ratio, the report said CPA consultant Rex I. Palacios presented a financial projection on budget proposals that would illustrate different results. However, Palacios warned that, despite any budget revisions, the overall conclusion is that six months is too short a time to increase revenues to the level required to achieve the DSCR.

Kiyu open to Citadel if...

Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez yesterday said he remains open to the purchase of Verizon Pacifica by the Citadel Holdings consortium, as long as certain conditions are met and are guaranteed. This includes keeping the rate integration system, which allows the CNMI to make cheap long distance calls to the U.S. mainland, the North American numbering plan that allows it to access 1-800 numbers and, possibly setting up at least one call station in the CNMI. Villagomez, who is a member of the Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication, said he has already communicated this sentiment to committee chairman Sen. Diego M. Songao, who is in Manila right now to meet with Citadel officials.

Jamaican Grill's Barnes is Chef's Cup winner

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Ray Barnes (winner), kitchen manager, Jamaican Grill Tumon branch; Paul Shimizu, owner, Ambros Inc.; Marry Torre, president, Guam Hotel & Restaurant Association; and Christine Matsuoka, general manager, Jamaican Grill Tumon branch.

HAGATNA, Guam—Budweiser named Jamaican Grill's Raymond Barnes as this year's Budweiser Chef's Cup winner of the 5th Annual Taste Guam. His winning recipe for the "Bud Jerk Chicken" proved to be the perfect combination of Jamaican Jerk Seasoning and Budweiser beer.

Participants of the Chef's Cup were tasked to compose a dish using Bud or Bud Light as one of its main ingredients. As the winner, Budweiser awarded Jamaican Grill the traveling trophy for a year, along with cash and other prizes.

Other events in the 5th Annual Taste Guam hosted by the Guam Hotel & Restaurant Association featured the 3rd Annual BurgerFest, which featured the Gourmet Burger Grilling Competition, People's Choice Award and Burger Eating Contest.

Net proceeds from Taste Guam will benefit the Micronesian Chef's Association, Guam Community College Culinary Arts Program and GHRA scholarships. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRADES TECHNICIAN

Opening Date: Monday, July 16, 2012
Closing Date: Monday, July 30, 2012

JVA 12-022: Mechanic, Six (6) positions or more, depending on funding.
JVA 12-023: Electrician, Two (2) positions or more, depending on funding.
JVA 12-024: Operator, Four (4) positions or more, depending on funding.
JVA 12-025: Machinist, One (1) position or more, depending on funding
JVA 12-026: Welder, Two (2) positions or more, depending on funding.

LOCATION:
- Power Plant 4, Puerto Rico, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- Lower Base, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- Possible, temporary assignment to Power Plant, Songsong, Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- Possible, temporary assignment to other sections of CUC throughout the Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- However these positions are primarily for the power plants on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.

SALARY: $17,282 to $25,059 per annum; un-classified; un-graded.

CONTRACT: Only if there are work authorization limitations. Otherwise, not contracted.

POSITION(S): See above.

DUTIES: Under the general supervision of the Deputy Director for Power or his/her designee. Provides direction to Trades Assistants to include assigning and monitoring tasks and providing direction. Performs journey level operations, maintenance and/or repairs in the service area assigned. Install new plant and equipment. Operate and maintain plant and equipment. Performs preventative maintenance in service area assigned. Maintains level of supplies and equipment. Positions assigned to Power Generation are also responsible for: Control room Operations and load dispatch. Monitor and balance generator and feeder loads.. Start up and synchronize generator sets. Monitoring lubrication oil and fuel consumption. Check and monitor engine oil and cooling water temperatures and pressures. Check and monitor bearing , exhaust gas and charge air temperatures. Record readings and report generator and feeder trips to plant management. Prepare switching programs and coordinate distribution line switching for plant and field staff. Monitoring loads on feeders and generators. Incinerating used oil and carry out SPCC plan routine work. Perform preventive maintenance and overhauls on plant and equipment. Troubleshoot and rectify faults on plant and equipment. Test and calibrate equipment. Condition monitoring and routine testing of generators, transformers and motors. Perform housekeeping duties. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult School Diploma (through the Adult Basic Education Program) and four years of increasingly responsible, proven experience in the trade assigned. Knowledge of: Principles and procedures of service area assigned; Inspection and troubleshooting principles; Preventative maintenance principles; Inventory control principles; Basic mathematics. Skill in: Preparing cost and materials estimates; Performing preventative maintenance; Performing journey level maintenance and installations in assigned service area; Performing site inspections and recognizing problem areas; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Admin. office.

CUC IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A. • Tel. Nos. (670) 235-7025 to 32 Fax (670) 235-5131

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENIOR SPECIALIST

Opening Date: 8/9/11
Closing Date: Monday, July 23, 2012

JVA No. 11-033: Operator at Power Generation
JVA No. 11-035: Electrician at Power Generation
JVA No. 11-034: Mechanic at Power Generation
JVA No. 11-036: Electrician at Water & Wastewater

LOCATION: Respective division; Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $30,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum; un-classified; un-graded.
CONTRACT: Not contracted.
POSITION(S): Minimum of two per JVA.

For More Information, Contact the CUC Human Resource Office.

SENIOR SPECIALIST

Opening Date: 8/9/11
Closing Date: Monday, July 23, 2012

JVA No. 11-037: Mechanic at Rota Power Plant
JVA No. 11-038: Electrician at Rota Power Plant

LOCATION: Power Plant; Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $30,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum; un-classified; un-graded.
CONTRACT: Not contracted.
POSITION(S): Minimum of one per JVA.

For More Information, Contact the CUC Human Resource Office.

TRADES ASSISTANT

Opening Date: 8/9/11
Closing Date: Monday, July 23, 2012

JVA 11-039: Assistant at Power Generation
JVA 11-041: Assistant at Water Division
VA 11-040: Assistant at Power Division (T&D)
JVA 11-042: Assistant at Wastewater Division

LOCATION: Respective division, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $11,036.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not contracted.
POSITION(S): Minimum of one per JVA.

For More Information, Contact the CUC Human Resource Office.

TRADES TECHNICIAN

Opening Date: 8/9/11
Closing Date: Monday, July 23, 2012

JVA 11-043: Electrician
JVA 11-045: Operator
JVA 11-047: Machinist
JVA 11-044: Mechanic
JVA 11-046: Welder

LOCATION: Power Generation, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $17,282.00 to $25,059.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not contracted.
POSITION(S): Minimum of one per JVA.

Remaining applicants for JVA numbers 11-043 to 11-047 will be considered part of the appropriate JVA numbers 12-022 to 12-026.
For More Information, Contact the CUC Human Resource Office.

TRADES TECHNICIAN

Opening Date: 5/18/12
Closing Date: Monday, July 23, 2012

JVA 12-011: Mechanic
JVA 12-013: Operator
JVA 12-015: Welder
JVA 12-012: Electrician
JVA 12-014: Machinist

LOCATION: Power Generation, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $17,282.00 to $25,059.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not contracted.
POSITION(S): Minimum of one per JVA.

Remaining applicants for JVA numbers 12-011 to 12-015 will be considered part of the appropriate JVA numbers 12-022 to 12-026.
For More Information, Contact the CUC Human Resource Office.

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

JVA No. 12-027

Opening Date: Monday, July 16, 2012
Closing Date: Monday, July 30, 2012

Safety Technician

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Technical Manager for Oil or his/her designee. Assists in inspections to inform, enforce and regulate compliance and environmental issues; writes citations for corrective actions. Assists in responding to incidents and emergencies to ensure compliance with laws, rules and regulations; ensures customer is issues are addressed and proper procedures are followed. Drafts reports on accidents and incidents. Assists in conducting a wide variety of workshops and/or orientations. Positions are also responsible for: Assisting field workers with traffic safety; Ensuring proper protective equipment is being used; Transporting vehicle operators for drug or alcohol testing; Investigating property theft and personal injuries; Conducting safety orientations and workshops. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required.

LOCATION(S):
- Power Plant 4, Puerto Rico, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- Lower Base, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- Possible, temporary assignment to Power Plant, Songsong, Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- Possible, temporary assignment to other sections of CUC throughout the Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
- However these positions are primarily for the Technical Manager of Oil Office on Saipan for the power plants on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.

SALARY: $17,000.00 to $20,000.00 per annum; un-classified; un-graded.

CONTRACT: Only if there are work authorization limitations. Otherwise, not contracted.

POSITION(S): Two.

Minimum Requirements: High School diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) or Adult School diploma through the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program and two years of work experience. Knowledge of: OSHA and other applicable laws, rules and regulations; Investigation techniques; Safety procedures; Mitigation procedures. Skills in: Conducting inspections; Conducting investigations; Reading plans and specifications; Performing testing; Interpreting policies, procedures, rules and regulations; Preparing reports; Giving presentations; Conducting workshops; Using a two-way radios; Using computers and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Applications may be picked up and dropped off at the Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building or the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

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Opinion

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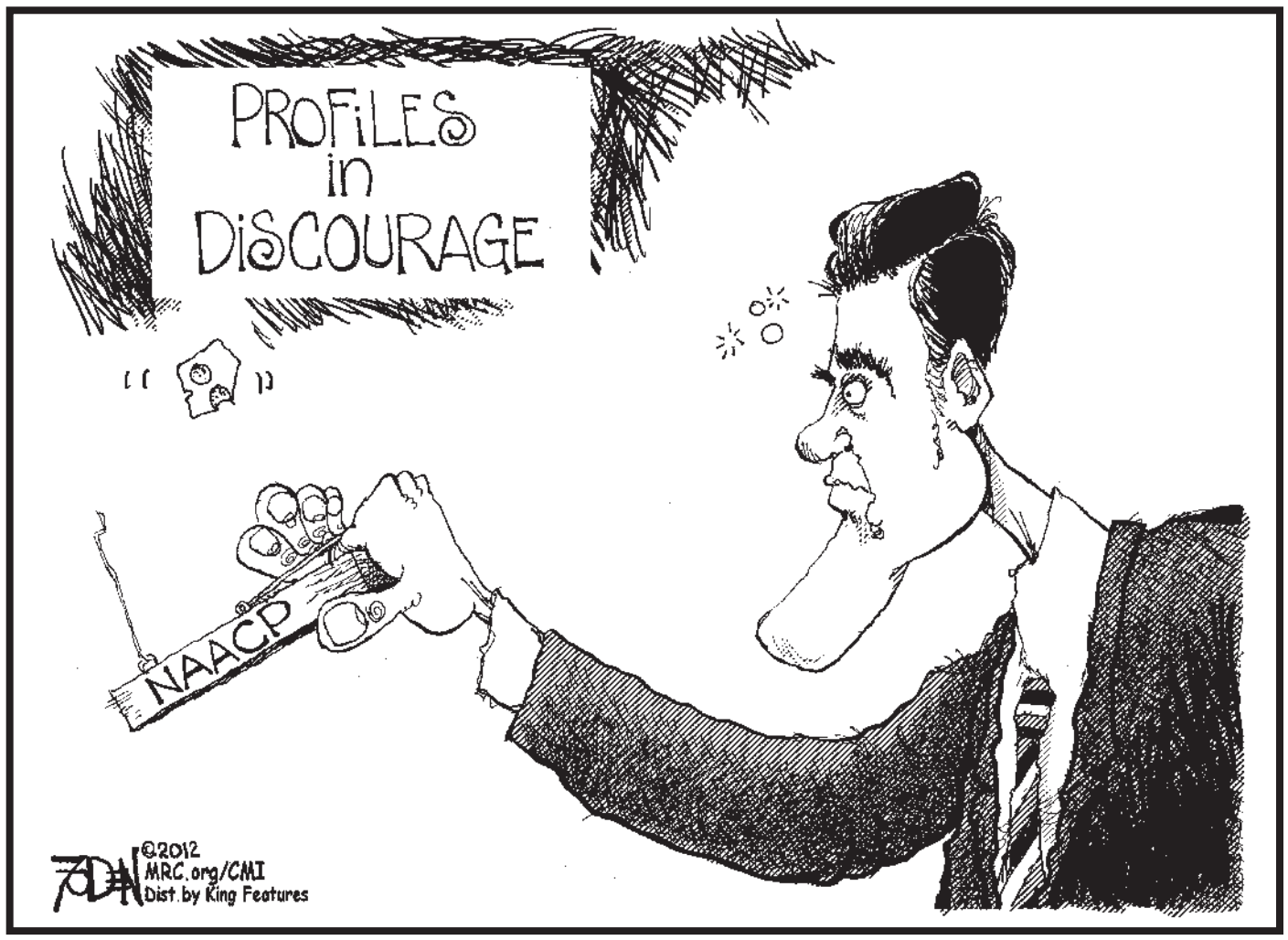


By KEVIN HORRIGAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Kevin Horrigan is a columnist for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Readers may write to him at:* St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 900 North Tucker Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. 63101, or e-mail him at khorrigan@post-dispatch.com.*

Originalism—a national seance over the Constitution

The Framers created a Federal Government of limited powers, and assigned to this Court the duty of enforcing those limits. The Court does so today. But the Court does not express an opinion on the wisdom of the Affordable Care Act. Under the Constitution, that judgment is reserved to the people.

The strangest part about the reaction to the Supreme Court decision on the Affordable Care Act has been all the communing with the dead. It's like we're having a giant national seance.

Across the River Styx are the famous "Framers," referenced above, with a capital "F," by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. in his majority opinion in National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius.

Even people who'd draw a Sarah Palin-like blank on identifying NFIB v. Sebelius can tell you precisely what the Framers intended with the Commerce Clause. These long-dead men clearly (a) intended to give Congress the right to legislate health care or (b) had no such intention, no more than they intended that Congress should regulate the consumption of broccoli.

You can hear the echoes of Madison and Jefferson arguing broccoli.

It's nice that regular folks now get to argue about these things. Lawyers and court-watchers have been doing it for decades. They craft long exegeses on the topic, clearly differentiating between "originalism" (what did the sainted Framers write?) and "intentionalism" (what did they intend?) and "interpretivism" (how should it be interpreted?).

Entire law schools are organized and divided along these lines or their opposites. People devote themselves to analyzing the lives and letters of the Constitution's framers, the origins and vagaries of linguistic usage in the late 18th century, the precedents in British common law and Enlightenment philosophy. The opposite sides pound each other in law review articles and—whenever a new appointee to the Supreme Court is being considered for confirmation—in endless Judiciary Committee hearings.

No wonder Anita Hill became such a big deal when Justice Clarence Thomas was being considered. At least that was something people could understand.

It is a fine thing that scholars debate these points. The law can't be whatever you want it to be, unless you're Vladimir Putin.

But when the argument is boiled to its essence, it comes down to this: Were the Framers just a bunch of really smart guys who couldn't possibly have imagined what the nation would become, or were they somehow imbued with supernatural wisdom transcending space and time?

Consider the arguments over the Second Amendment. Justice Roberts' court has determined that the Framers intended that "the right to bear arms" means that an individual has the right to own firearms. The court further decided that the Framers meant firearms "in common use at the time."

Common at the time of the Framers were single-shot rifles and

See ORIGINALISM on Next Page

Attack-dog days of summer

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for The Los Angeles Times*. Readers may send him e-mail at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

The dog days of July were once a slow time in our presidential campaigns, a time when candidates could take vacations and voters could take a break. The party conventions were still a month or more away; aside from fundraising and backroom strategizing, there wasn't much to see.

But that quaint old calendar is gone now; no lazing by Lake Winnipesaukee allowed. This month, the presidential campaign has rampaged along at full force, fueled by millions of dollars in donations and polls that seem locked in a virtual tie.

That's how we find ourselves in midsummer arguing not over the best way to revive the economy or to fix the healthcare system but over exactly when Mitt Romney left his job at Bain Capital—was it 1999 or 2002?—and whether President Obama is dishonoring his office by playing so rough.

Those aren't the issues that will decide this election. This month's controversies are a preliminary bout, a push by each candidate to drive up the other's "negatives." But such battles have turned July into an unexpectedly important test for both sides.

What the Obama campaign is doing to Romney this month comes straight out of the textbook: If voters don't know much about your opponent—and polls show most voters know little about Romney—jump into the vacuum and define him yourself.

If your opponent is running on his record as a businessman, talk about the employees he laid off. If your opponent won't release old income tax returns, charge that he must be hiding something.

"Romney is more vulnerable than Obama because he is less known," the president's chief strategist, David Axelrod, told me in an email. "It's all new information"—to most voters, anyway.

That's why the Obama campaign has been spending millions of dollars on television advertising in swing states like Ohio and Florida at this unusually early stage of the campaign—to try to turn voters against Romney before the Republican has a chance to introduce himself properly. There's evidence that the gambit is working; in the swing states, voters are more likely to say Romney's business background is a negative, not a positive.

Initially, the Romney campaign dismissed Obama's attacks as ineffective. "They're not sticking," a Romney advisor told me in June. Besides, the last thing the GOP candidate wanted was to be drawn into an argument about his personal finances; he preferred to keep the conversation on Obama's disappointing economic record.

"If you're responding, you're losing," Romney told a Fox News interviewer. But by the end of last week, the GOP candidate decided that he needed to answer the charges and changed course, issuing a flurry of angry rejoinders and a television commercial charging that Obama wasn't telling the truth.

Who won the exchange? Obama, for now. His campaign succeeded in getting the media to pay attention to the question of whether Romney still controlled Bain Capital in 2000, when at least one of its companies moved some U.S. jobs to Mexico. And as long as Romney resists releasing his income tax returns for the years before 2010, he'll remain vulnerable to the charge that he's hiding something, even if it's only a string of years in which he made dizzyingly high amounts of money and paid impressively low tax rates.

But the Romney campaign also survived an important test—a test of self-restraint. During the primary campaign, Romney occasionally got rattled and uttered a memorable gaffe when he was questioned about his personal wealth. One of the Obama campaign's not-very-secret goals was to see if they could bait him into doing it again.

"He's gone two months without saying anything stupid," noted Eddie Mahe Jr., a former deputy chairman of the Republican National Committee. "He hasn't screwed up, and that's important."

Some Republicans may want more fire from Romney, but one advisor told me less is more. "Romney's campaign is risk-averse because a challenger to a weak incumbent needs to be acceptable" to as many voters as possible, he said. "That, with a weak economy, is his best chance of winning."

Still, Romney needs to change the subject. He could do that by naming his choice for vice president early. (Betting has swung toward Tim Pawlenty, the former governor of Minnesota, a conservative with an appealing blue-collar life story.) He could unveil a slimmed-down version of his unwieldy 59-point economic plan, as some advisors have proposed. Or maybe just take a trip to Israel, Poland and the London Olympics, as he plans to do at the end of the month.

Obama needs to turn a corner as well—to convince voters that he has a plan for his second term that will work better than his first. He has plenty of proposals, of course, laid out in budgets and State of the Union speeches. But at the moment, his campaign is mostly about castigating Romney and Republicans in Congress. "He needs to move from the past to the future," advises Tad Devine, a Democratic strategist who helped run John Kerry's presidential campaign in 2004.

In other words, enough with the negatives. Can we stipulate that neither one of these guys is Abraham Lincoln, and move on?

Patience, their strategists say. The main events and the serious content are still to come: the conventions, the debates, the frenzied home stretch in the fall.

In the meantime, driving up the other guy's negatives with a flurry of punches is what it's all about.

Election Day is less than four months away, but it's going to feel like a long time.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

At issue: Fragile island economies

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Island economies are fragile and literally at the mercy of shifts in what's now a globalized economy. This is further exacerbated by the natural challenge of island nations and territories being resource-poor. Thus, most island communities adhere to tradition or venture into contemporary economic opportunities like the fickle tourism industry.

For instance, the CNMI's only major economic foundation is tourism. It is a fickle industry that spirals upwards or downwards depending upon the severity in the growth rate and natural or man-made disasters in such markets as Japan, China, South Korea, and others.

It makes it obligatory for leadership to watch nearby markets daily to see how these markets perform and what it means to our fragile economy if, i.e., Japan is dealt another "big one" (tsunami and earthquake) in the Tokyo area. Japan now looks to transferring government functions to cities like Osaka and Nagoya. The point is: People don't leave home when a serious disaster hits. It means guarding family savings until the disaster has calmed down and reconstruction work is completed as communities work on recovery.

If you will, seismic experts in universities and agencies in Japan are carefully monitoring the movement of tectonic plates near Tokyo. A crushing of crusts in the deep could mean serious destruction to Tokyo. Hope it doesn't happen lest tourism here would see another heavy blow when our friends from the Land of the Rising Sun opt to stay closer to home. This is the fragility of island economies that obviates the question: Are there alternatives to mitigating the fickleness of tourism?

Appalling how our saviors on the hill have saddled private industries with more punitive taxes, convinced it's the holy grail of revenue generation. But isn't it true that more taxes in a very bad business climate exact economic contraction rather than economic growth? Haven't you read how large businesses have quickly moved out of states with punitive taxes and stifling regulations into states that have far less of it? This must be the evil genius designed by a bunch of ignoramuses.

With the elected elite (and notice I didn't use the word "leadership" for it would be a misfeasance), we need someone who could guide the CNMI in rebuilding stronger paths to prosperity like we used to know. Fiscal trauma only breeds uncertainty as private industries juggle the question whether it should invest more of its lifetime savings or wait for the fatal storms political indecisions and obsolescence to pass.

■ ■ ■

Cost of living on Tinian/Rota

The cost of living on Tinian and Rota is such that I cringe to even imagine what our brothers and sisters have to endure in these bad economic times, paying quintuple (five times as much) what consumers on Saipan fork out for gasoline and basic necessities.

What's the root cause of this issue? Is it the cost of shipping, quintuple taxation when goods touch down on the two islands in addition to middlemen fees? What's the mark-up like or is this end of the equation fair? It boggles the mind and it's time that the delegations of the two senatorial districts buckle down to eliminating fees and taxes that have pushed the cost of basic necessities beyond the reach of most consumers. How long would you snooze on the job?

Goods are assessed fees when it touches down in Guam. It is further assessed gross receipts tax and other fees when it lands on Saipan. The parade of charges is parroted when goods destined for the two islands are shipped off. Where in this lengthy and fatally costly parade hang the fees and taxes that need to be reduced or repealed altogether? Which among middlemen fees could be eliminated forthwith? We need to buckle down, address, and resolve this "hardship cost" for the sake of families to the south.

What would trigger the cost of gasoline to hit nearly $6 per gallon on Rota? Does it cost that much to ship fuel from Guam that lies about three to four hours away? Why would a case of chicken fryers cost about $50 per case? Is the shipping rate (air or surface) still horrendously high even with the cost of fuel going down at the global market? Somehow this looks more like a scam than anything else. I mean how much is charged shipping items from Saipan (already assessed landing fees, wharfage fees and gross receipts tax) aside from landing fees in Guam? Is the prohibitive mark-up the crux of the cost of goods skyrocketing?

The two delegations must probe this issue forthwith. If anything, this must be addressed collectively with the central government because the people on these two islands can't be taken as being "stupid" for living way from the business center. Hello? Anybody home? Could you roll up your sleeves and begin the task at hand? Si Yuus Maase`!

■ ■ ■

'I don't know Maria,' again?

The CNMI has seen its economic pillars and foundation reduced to rubble by the imposition of stifling federal and local laws. Add to the pile of mess is leadership's inability to jointly preside over the affairs of the CNMI with some sense of purpose and moral humility. No wonder the troubling and deepening economic meltdown. Admirable, though, the lame agility of alleged leadership struggling to decipher what happened while nursing disorientation.

Frankly, I prefer overlooking the lack of leadership at home, wary that there's hardly anything that government could do effectively. It can't even figure out how to waste taxpayers' money properly or refine its corrupt ways even after a lengthy on-the-job-training. Nauseating, though, that when they allegedly found a little money it became an instant celebration of mediocrity.

■ ■ ■

The administration encourages people to get off the welfare rolls, saying they should be out working. I'm in agreement with both aspects of its assertion except there's a serious missing link: Has it been successful in wealth and jobs creation so that NAP recipients could find meaningful employment to avoid the humiliation of lining up for coupons at month's end? Or is the woefully suspect assertion just another lame election year drivel? You want people to work but have you created jobs over the last six years? If so, can someone quantify the job numbers and placement?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Poor budget planning

Pension plans are employee benefits. Because of the way CNMI government leaders have approached budget planning in the past few years these benefits are being taken away. CNMI government employees are going into the Social Security system. Since the negotiations regarding this are not transparent, it is not known how this will transpire. However, it is speculated that CNMI employees will be credited with five years of Social Security—only five years. So with this new math formula five years in the defined benefit plan = five years of Social Security. But the defined benefit plan stopped taking in new members a few years ago when the defined contribution plan came into effect. Chances are, these government workers in the defined benefit plan have worked for eight years or more. So is it still eight years government service = five years of Social Security, and 12 = five years and so on?

CNMI government workers will soon be in the Social Security system and will wait until they are at least 62 years old to receive benefits. That is if they paid in at least 40 quarters into Social Security. However they will take a 30-percent cut of their benefits at age 62. (http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/agereduction.htm)

Let's compare Social Security with the CNMI pension that was starved to death by government leaders. If you wait until you are 62, earned $30,000 for at least three years, paid in at least 40 of your quarters and want to draw Social Security it would look like this: $767 per month or $9,204 per year. If you could draw from the CNMI defined benefit, were 52 or older, had 20 years of service, earned $30,000 for at least three years it would look like this: $1,250 per month or $15,000 per year.

So because of CNMI government leaders' past approach toward budget planning, a CNMI employee as approximated above will have his/her retirement cut by about $483 per month or $5,796 per year. This is not even considering that the expected life span in the CNMI is 77.27 years (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cq.html) and the difference of enjoying retirement at 55 versus working until 62, or perhaps even 67 years old. So going over to Social Security will help ensure a stable retirement for the people of the commonwealth. However, you, the CNMI government workers, are taking a huge financial hit in your golden years.

Another point, the Social Security tax rate for employees is 4.2 percent through the end of 2012. Its usually 6.2 percent but Congress lowered it because of the current high unemployment rate in the mainland. The Social Security tax rate for employers, which would be the CNMI government, is 6.2 percent. (http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/240/~/2012-social-security-tax-rate-and-maximum-taxable-earnings) CNMI government employees are currently being deducted around 8.5 to 9.5 percent. So will they receive a refund of 2 to 3 percent for every year that they are credited for Social Security? And since it appears that they will get only five years' credit in the Social Security plan, will the CNMI employees receive the balance of those years that they paid into their pension fund? Or will this be considered cost, the cost of past poor budget planning by CNMI government leaders?

Juan Cruz
Austin, Texas

Open letter to Oliver Gonzales

Mr. Gonzales, I really appreciated the hard work you're doing with the Joeten-Kiya Public Library and applaud you for that work. I totally support the effort you're doing and I hope that it can continue for the sake of our children's future. Without support and dedication to the needs of our children, their future will not succeed. I hope that the bookmobile program can be extended to Rota and Tinian because to some they do not have transportation. With the distance of the public library our children cannot make it.

Please continue the effort, commitment, and dedication because without someone's effort I don't foresee anything that can be extended to our children. I hope that our leaders will assist you in any way possible for the betterment of our children's future. Our children's education is our future. Continue your work because people will realize the hard work and commitment in the community.

Again, thank you for the effort and commitment. Should you need any assistance from the island of Rota, I am sure that I can be of assistance to you for the betterment of our children.

Dexter Apatang
Sinapalo I, Rota

ORIGINALISM

From Page 10

pistols. Common today are semi-automatic rifles and handguns that can fire multiple rounds at velocities undreamed of when the Second Amendment was written. What's more, the court has declined to place limits on how many of these weapons an individual may buy and possess.

The court decided that the values, premise and principle—possession of weapons in common use at the time—extend across the centuries.

What's amazing is how often an individual—be he a Supreme Court justice or a guy on the street—finds that the Framers' judicial views coincide with his political views.

Sometimes the law guides justices in unexpected directions. So it happened with former Justices John Paul Stevens and David Souter, Republican appointees who came to anchor the court's liberal wing. So it happened with Chief Justice Roberts on health care.

Now the too-hideous-for-Fox Glenn Beck is selling T-shirts featuring the chief justice's picture and the word "Coward."

We find parallels to this in religion. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Taliban have been known to collect cellphones, radios and televisions and set fire to them. They reason that such devices weren't available in the seventh century, thus Islam's "framers" would not want them used in the 21st.

Often the moral police are carrying Kalashnikov rifles, which were not widely available in the seventh century.

And consider the debate within America's Christian religious circles about the intentions of the "framers" of their faith. Catholicism's framers were OK with married priests and bishops for a thousand years, but now it's verboten. Some Protestant churches have women priests or gay and Lesbian priests. Other churches won't even play softball against teams from churches with gay pastors.

In religion and in the law, different people examine the same founding texts and come away with startlingly different conclusions. All sides claim to commune with the spirit of various framers. All sides can make angels dance on the heads of pins.

There really should be one simple rule. Fortunately there is, and it is golden.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.
▲88° ▼78°

THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.
▲87 ° ▼78°

FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°

SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°

SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°

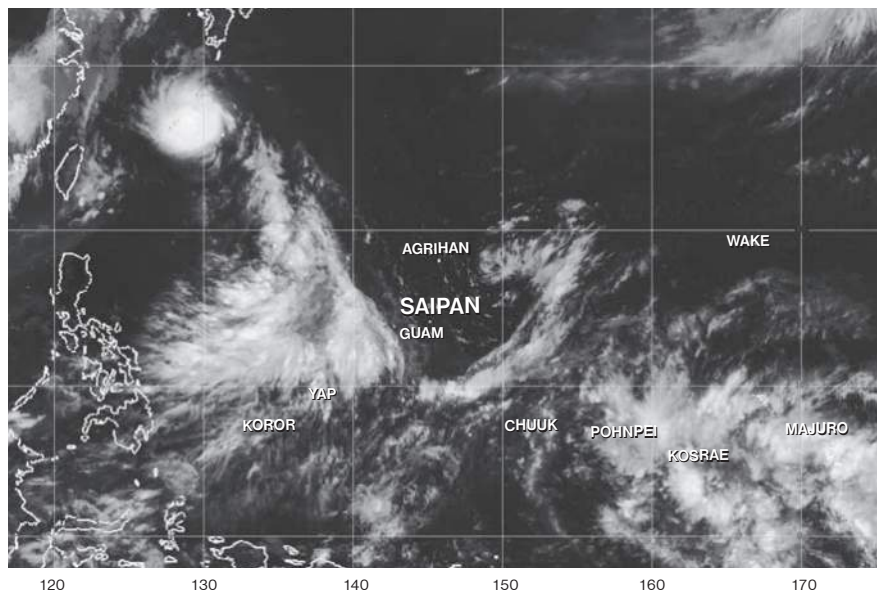
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Palau	Showers	▲83	▼75
Yap	Showers	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲85	▼78
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲60	▼43
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼70
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲90	▼83
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼75
London	Showers	▲69	▼58
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼59
Manila	Thundershowers	▲88	▼79
Melbourne	Showers	▲58	▼39
Miami	Thundershowers	▲88	▼78
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲98	▼79
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲91	▼75
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲79	▼59
Pusan	Thunderstorms	▲81	▼75
Rome	Sunny	▲92	▼69
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼59
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼52
Seoul	Thunderstorms	▲89	▼75
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼76
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲101	▼82

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough extends southeastward from Tropical storm Khanun (08W) now centered near Okinawa at 26N131E to end near another circulation centered near 17N135E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found west of the Mariana Islands and north of Yap between 10N and 18N from 130E to 142E and southwest of Iwo To island within 100 miles of a line from 18N138E to 25N134E. A near-equatorial trough meanders eastward from near Chuuk at 7N149E to south of Majuro at 4N172E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are present south of a line from 10N156E to 6N180. This includes Pohnpei and Kosrae states and the Marshall Islands. An upper-level low is centered northeast of Saipan at 17N150E. Scattered showers and thunderstorms are seen east of the Marianas within 70 miles of a line arcing from 10N146E to 11N151E to 16N154E to 19N150E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:09 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
7:02 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
2:30 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
9:29 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Thursday	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Sunday	5:57 AM	6:50 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	4:51 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday	5:43 AM	6:46 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	7:30 PM
Saturday	7:29 AM	8:13 PM
Sunday	8:22 AM	8:55 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 14, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 3, 5

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 3, 5
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5074	11:30am	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:45am	Daily
DL285	6:30am	9:15am	1, 3, 5, 7
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)

OZ606/120	2:20am	8:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/120	2:50am	8:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily

SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:00pm	Daily via NRT
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	3:10pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 3, 5 via SPN

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)

UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 3, 5

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 3, 5 via ROP
UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7
UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL286	7:40pm	12:15am +1	2, 4, 6, 7
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily

OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN

OZ119/606	9:30am	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ119/606	9:30am	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

DL172/288	7:50am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5079	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA5071	10:10pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ704/603	11:40pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
UA180/5071	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

US economy appears weaker as retail sales slump

WASHINGTON (AP)—The outlook for the U.S. economy appeared dimmer Monday after a report that Americans spent less at retail businesses for a third straight month in June.

The report led some economists to downgrade their estimates for economic growth in the April-June quarter. Many now think the economy grew even less than in the first quarter of the year, when it expanded at a sluggish 1.9 percent annual rate.

Spending in June fell in nearly every major category—from autos, furniture and appliances to building, garden supplies and department stores. Overall, retail sales slid 0.5 percent from May to June, the Commerce Department said.

Retail sales hadn't fallen for three straight months since the fall of 2008, at the height of the financial crisis. The weak U.S. spending figures were released on the same day that the International Monetary Fund slightly lowered its outlook for global growth over the next two years.

AP

In this June 15, 2012, file photo, a woman walks into a Lane Bryant store in San Jose, Calif.

Stocks fell after the Commerce report was issued. The Dow Jones industrial average sank 74 points in early trading. Broader indexes also declined. Later in the day, stocks regained some of their losses.

"However hard you look, there's just no good news in this report," said Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics.

Weakening retail spending could make the Federal Reserve more likely to act further to try to encourage more borrowing and spending by lowering long-term interest rates. The Fed's policy committee will meet at the end of this month.

Most economists don't expect new Fed action after that meeting. But some said Monday's Commerce report, coming after three straight months of tepid hiring, makes some Fed action more likely by year's end.

Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke will testify to Congress about the economy on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Consumer bureau to police 30 credit reporting bureaus

NEW YORK (AP)—The companies that determine Americans' credit scores are about to come under scrutiny by the country's new consumer watchdog.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said Monday that it will start supervising the 30 largest firms that make up 94 percent of the industry. That includes the three big credit reporting firms: Equifax Inc., Experian and TransUnion.

This marks the first time that a single government agency will take an active role in policing credit bureaus, according to industry experts. The Fair Credit Reporting Act currently requires them to keep accurate information about consumers.

Richard Cordray, the government agency's director, said in a speech Monday that the CFPB said its oversight may include on-sight examinations, and that it may require credit bureaus to file reports.

"It's a wonderful thing for the American public," said Pamela Banks, the senior policy counsel for Consumers Union, the policy arm of Consumer Reports. "Now there's somebody on their side."

Each of the three major credit reporting agencies maintains files on more than 200 million Americans. These reports are filled with a history of loan payments, credit card accounts and other financial details. Past behavior, from late payments to credit-card balances, is used to create a credit score.

Banks said she expects that when people dispute details on their credit reports, credit bureaus will now act more quickly to fix any problems. "They won't want the CFPB breathing down their necks," she said.

Jon Ulzheimer, president of consumer education at SmartCredit.com and a former Equifax employee, said the CFPB may soon clarify what the Fair Credit Reporting Act requires of credit bureaus, a constant source of debate in the consumer credit world. When people challenge what's in their credit report, the Fair Credit Reporting Act requires the bureaus to investigate.

"But what exactly constitutes a reasonable investigation?" Ulzheimer asks. "The act doesn't say."

Needles found in sandwiches on 4 Delta flights

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Delta Air Lines Inc. and the FBI are trying to figure out how needles got into turkey sandwiches served aboard four flights from Amsterdam. One passenger was injured.

The airline said that what appear to be sewing needles were found in five sandwiches on Sunday. One passenger on a flight to Minneapolis was injured, but the passenger declined to get medical attention, according to Delta spokeswoman Kristin Baur. The other needles were on two flights to Atlanta and one to Seattle.

The FBI's Atlanta office has opened a criminal investigation into the matter, the agency said in a written statement. An FBI spokesman in Atlanta did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Baur said flight attendants stopped serving the sandwiches as soon as the needle was discovered. Messages went out to other flights en route from Amsterdam, where the sandwiches had been prepared by a catering company. Another sandwich served on the Minneapolis-bound flight also had a needle, Baur said.

After the needles were found, passengers got pizza instead.

Baur said security for its meal production has been increased and it is using more prepackaged food while the investigation continues.

"Delta is taking this matter extremely seriously and is cooperating with local and federal authorities who are investigating the incident. Delta has taken immediate action with our in-flight caterer at Amsterdam to ensure the safety and quality of the food we provide onboard our aircraft," the airline said in a written statement.

The sandwiches were made in the Amsterdam kitchen of catering company Gate Gourmet, and were to be served to business class passengers on Delta flights.

Gate Gourmet spokeswoman Christina Ulosevich said the company has gotten no reports of similar incidents on any of the other airlines it serves out of Amsterdam. She said the company did not yet know how the needles got into the sandwiches.

YAHOO! turns to former nemesis to be its CEO savior

SUNNYVALE, Calif. (AP)—As a top executive at Google for the past 13 years, Marissa Mayer played an instrumental role in developing many of the services that have tormented Yahoo as its appeal waned among Web surfers, advertisers and investors.

Now, Yahoo is turning to its longtime nemesis to fix everything that has gone wrong while Google Inc. has been cementing its position as the Internet's most powerful company.

Mayer, 37, will tackle the imposing challenge Tuesday when she takes over as Yahoo's fifth CEO in the past five years.

The surprise hiring announced late Monday indicates Yahoo still believes it can be an Internet innovator instead of merely an online way station where people pass through to read a news story or watch a video clip before moving on to more compelling Internet destinations.

Mayer

"I just saw a huge opportunity to have a global impact on users and really help the company in terms of managing its portfolio, attracting great talent and really inspiring and delighting people," Mayer said during a Monday interview with The Associated Press.

Like her predecessors, Mayer will have to come up with an effective strategy to compete against the juggernaut that Google has become and the increasingly influential force that Facebook Inc. is turning into as more people immerse themselves in its social network.

Both Google, the Internet's search leader, and Facebook have been beating Yahoo Inc. in the battle for Web surfers' attention and advertisers' marketing budgets. As Yahoo has lagged in that pivotal race, so has its financial performance and stock price. The stock has been slumping since Yahoo Inc. balked at a chance to sell itself to Microsoft Corp. for $47.5 billion, or $33 per share, in May 2008.

Yahoo shares closed Monday at $15.65, and haven't traded above $20 since September 2008.

"If she can pull this off and turn around Yahoo, it will make her legacy," Gartner Inc. analyst Allen Weiner said of Mayer. "Yahoo's iconic yodel has been missing for a long time. Her mission will be to bring that yodel back."

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
12,727.21	1,353.64	2,896.94
-49.88	-3.14	-11.53
-0.39%	-0.23%	-0.40%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9779	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7543	Philippine Peso	41.9992
British Pound	0.6439	Indian Rupee	55.4017	Singapore Dollar	1.2656
Canadian Dollar	1.0208	Indonesian Rupiah	9,460.73	South Korean Won	1,142.9
Chinese Yuan	6.3155	Japanese Yen	79.4281	Swiss Franc	0.9798
Euro	0.8158	Malaysian Ringgit	3.1830	Taiwan Dollar	29.9760
		New Zealand Dollar	1.2562	Thailand Baht	31.7259

Nation

Drought now grips more than half of the nation

AP

Boats sit on the dry, cracked bottom in a dry cove at Morse Reservoir in Noblesville, Ind., Monday, July 16, 2012. The reservoir is down nearly 6 feet from normal levels and being lowered 1 foot every five days to provide water for Indianapolis.

By JIM SUHR and STEVE KARNOWSKI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WALTONVILLE, Ill. (AP)—The nation's widest drought in decades is spreading, with more than half of the continental United States now in some stage of drought and most of the rest enduring abnormally dry conditions.

Only in the 1930s and the 1950s has a drought covered more land, according to federal figures released Monday. So far, there's little risk of a Dust Bowl-type catastrophe, but crop losses could mount if rain doesn't come soon.

In its monthly drought report, the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C., announced that 55 percent of the country was in a moderate to extreme drought at the end of June. The parched conditions expanded last month in the West, the Great Plains and the Midwest, fueled by the 14th warmest and 10th driest June on record, the report said.

Topsoil has turned dry while "crops, pastures and rangeland have deteriorated at a rate rarely seen in the last 18 years," the report said.

The percentage of affected land is the largest since December 1956, when 58 percent of the country was covered by drought, and it rivals even some years in the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s, though experts point out that this year's weather has been milder than that period, and farming practices have been vastly improved since then.

In southern Illinois, Kenny Brummer has lost 800 acres of corn that he grows to feed his 400 head of cattle and 30,000 hogs. Now he's scrambling to find hundreds of thousands of bushels of replacement feed.

"Where am I going to get that from? You have concerns about it every morning when you wake up," said Brummer, who farms near Waltonville. "The drought is bad, but that's just half of the problem on this farm."

Around a third of the nation's corn crop has been hurt, with some of it so badly damaged that farmers have already cut down their withered plants to feed to cattle. As of Sunday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said, 38 percent of the corn crop was in poor or very poor condition, compared with 30 percent a week earlier.

"This is definitely the epicenter—right in the heart of the Midwest," said climatologist Mark Svoboda with the Nebraska-based National Drought Mitigation Center.

It's all a huge comedown for farmers who had expected a record year when they sowed 96.4 million acres in corn, the most since 1937. The Department of Agriculture initially predicted national average corn yields of 166 bushels per acre this year.

Paterno family denies Louis Freeh report findings

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joe Paterno's family on Monday vowed its own investigation of the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse scandal, rejecting the findings of a special investigator who concluded the late football coach and other top Penn State administrators concealed Sandusky's abuse to shield the university from bad publicity.

"Our interest has been and remains the uncovering of the truth," the family said in a statement.

The family characterized the 267-page report by former FBI Director Louis Freeh, who was hired by the university's board of trustees, as "yet another shocking turn of events in this crisis" and said Paterno, who died in January at age 85, did not knowingly protect a pedophile.

Paterno

"We are dismayed by, and vehemently disagree with, some of the conclusions and assertions and the process by which they were developed," the statement said. "Mr. Freeh presented his opinions and interpretations as if they were absolute facts."

Sandusky awaits sentencing after being convicted last month of abusing 10 boys. He has maintained his innocence.

Freeh, citing emails and handwritten notes, concluded that Paterno intervened to stop a plan by three top Penn State officials to report a 2001 allegation against Sandusky to child-welfare authorities. The report also cited two emails that showed Paterno knew about a 1998 allegation against his longtime defensive coordinator. Freeh said Paterno and the other three officials, including ousted Penn State President Graham Spanier, exhibited "callous and shocking" disregard for child victims.

Cronyism and outsourcing: Romney, Obama trade jabs

CINCINNATI (AP)—Using unusually vivid language, Mitt Romney tried to take the political offensive against President Barack Obama on Monday, accusing Obama of cronyism that "stinks" in steering federal contracts to supporters. He also dropped hints through a spokesman that a vice presidential pick could come any day.

Unfazed, Obama needled his Republican rival for finally having a job-creation plan—for people overseas.

At the same time, though Romney endeavored to switch the campaign focus, questions about his tenure at Bain Capital, a venture capital company, seemed destined to shape the conversation at least a while longer. On a day devoted mainly to raising money, Romney went on Fox News to complain that all Obama can do "is attack me" on Bain and other subjects rather than taking useful steps to improve the economy.

Sure enough, the Democratic incumbent showed no sign of letting up.

Rallying for support in crucial Ohio, Obama said Romney's proposal to free companies from taxes on their foreign holdings would displace American workers. The president cited a study he said concluded that "Gov. Romney's economic plan would in fact create 800,000 jobs. There's only one problem, the jobs wouldn't be in America."

Romney's campaign, itself moving to the attack, contended that Obama's Energy Department has steered loans and grants to several companies connected to the president's political supporters.

ACROSS THE NATION

Lake drained in search for Iowa cousins, 8 and 10

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—Authorities began draining an Iowa lake Monday in the search for two missing girls whose bicycles were found nearby, but they suspended a massive sweep of the area that drew hundreds of volunteers over the weekend because the effort failed to produce significant leads. Elizabeth Collins, 8, and her cousin, Lyric Cook-Morrissey, 10, were last reported seen Friday afternoon leaving their grandmother's house. Their bicycles and Elizabeth's purse were found later that day near a bike trail at the edge of Meyers Lake in the northeast Iowa city of Evansdale. Authorities previously dredged the lake and have been interviewing family, friends and registered sex offenders who live in the area.

Feds providing $250K for tsunami debris removal

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Monday announced it will provide $250,000 in grants to five states affected by debris from last year's tsunami in Japan. The agency said Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California and Hawaii will each receive up to $50,000 toward debris removal from its marine debris program. Money could be made available as early as this month. U.S. Sen. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, quickly deemed the amount "woefully inadequate." He said in a statement that the tsunami created a "slow-motion environmental disaster that will unfold over several years." Begich had requested at least $45 million in funding.

Ark. sheriff: Teen murder suspect found hanging

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—A 16-year-old Arkansas boy suspected in the fatal stabbing of another teen died over the weekend after workers at a juvenile detention center found him hanging from a bedsheet, a sheriff said Monday. The death of the 16-year-old is being investigated as a suicide, said Steve Jeffery, sheriff in Independence County in northeast Arkansas. The teen's name has not been released because he was a minor. Jeffery said the teen was being held on a murder charge in the death of 18-year-old Nicholas Zurosky. Police said Zurosky was a suspect himself in the shooting death of another 18-year-old, Lisa Steele, before he turned up dead last week in Paragould, about 150 miles northeast of Little Rock.

Ohio man charged in deaths of Michigan sisters

BLISSFIELD, Mich. (AP)—A search that began over the weekend continued Monday for a 38-year-old Ohio man charged in the fatal shootings of his ex-girlfriend and her sister and the wounding of their mother in southeastern Michigan. Michigan State Police said Monday that Thomas Fritz of Sylvania, Ohio, faces two counts of open murder and one count of assault with intent to commit murder in Lenawee County. He's accused of killing 24-year-old Lisa Gritzmaker and 33-year-old Amy Merrill. Police say he also wounded their mother, 52-year-old Robin Lynn McCowan. All were shot late Friday night in Blissfield, about 20 miles northwest of Toledo, Ohio. Police found the women at a home after responding to a 911 call from one of the victims.

3 teens charged in fatal beating of Chicago man

CHICAGO (AP)—Three Chicago teenagers accused of fatally beating a disabled man and posting video of the attack on Facebook were playing a game that involved finding an innocent victim and trying to knock him out with a punch, investigators alleged in court documents released Monday. Delfino Mora, a 62-year-old father of 12, was attacked in an alley last week while searching for cans that he collected to make extra money for his family. Authorities said one of the teens punched Mora, who hit his head on the concrete, as the others filmed the attack with a cellphone. They then robbed him of $60. All three are charged as adults with first-degree murder and are being held without bond.

Asia

Detained ex-Philippine leader faces new graft case

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine prosecutors filed a non-bailable corruption charge Monday against former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, which she said was aimed at ensuring she remains in detention as she fights to be released on bail in a separate vote-tampering case.

Renato Bocar, executive clerk of the special Sandiganbayan anti-graft court, said the new plunder, or high-level corruption, complaint accuses Arroyo and nine other former government officials of misuse of 365 million pesos ($8.7 million) in state lottery funds from 2008 to 2010, when she stepped down from nine turbulent years in power.

The maximum penalty for plunder is life in prison, confiscation of stolen funds and disqualification from public office for life.

Arroyo's lawyer, Anacleto Diaz, denied the charge, saying it was an effort by President Benigno Aquino III's administration to keep her in detention and demonize her when he delivers his annual state of the nation address next week.

"This is another dark day for the rule of law," Diaz said in a statement.

Left-wing Rep. Teddy Casino, one of the complainants, said the complaint accuses Arroyo and other officials of shifting lottery money into an intelligence fund that could no longer be traced.

Arroyo, once regarded as one of Asia's most powerful women, was arrested and placed in hospital detention last year for allegedly ordering the tampering of 2007 elections to ensure victory for her candidates in a vote-rich and violent southern Philippine province controlled by a political ally.

She has denied the vote-tampering charge and has asked a suburban Manila court to free her on bail. Although the election sabotage charge also is non-bailable, the court could grant Arroyo bail in about two weeks if it rules that the evidence against her is weak.

Arroyo

The vote-tampering charge was the first of a number of criminal cases filed against Arroyo by the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, who has blasted his predecessor's leadership during years of corruption scandals, failed coup attempts and political unrest. Her trial in the vote-tampering case is expected to begin next month.

Aquino, the son of pro-democracy heroes, succeeded Arroyo in 2010 after winning a landslide victory on a promise to fight widespread corruption, poverty and misrule.

Arroyo and her camp have portrayed her prosecution as a political vendetta to destroy her reputation and mask a failure by Aquino to improve the lives of Filipinos, about a third of whom live on $1 a day.

The new corruption charge accuses Arroyo of conniving with officials of the Commission on Audit and the Philippines Charity Sweepstakes Office to use lottery funds "in the guise of fictitious expenditures for their personal gain and benefit," Bocar said, citing case documents.

Arroyo, 65, has been writing her memoir in a military hospital where she is detained and is being treated for a bone ailment, spokeswoman Maria Elena Bautista-Horn said.

BLESSED RELIEF AP
Pakistani children enjoy cool water from a waterfall after a monsoon rains brings relief from the hot weather in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Waterfall-like rain eases in Japan, but 28 dead

TOKYO (AP)—Most of the quarter-million people who fled massive flooding in southwest Japan were able to return home by Monday, but the danger had not fully passed from record rains that have killed at least 28 people.

Thousands of homes and hundreds of roads were damaged, and hundreds of landslides were reported. The military airlifted food by helicopter to stranded districts. The rain "was like a waterfall," Yoko Yoshika said in Yamaguchi prefecture (state). "It was horrible."

Yoshika, wife of an award-winning Hagi-yaki style potter, said workers used a bucket relay with plastic pails to get rid of the water flowing into their shop.

In Yame, a city of 69,000 in Fukuoka prefecture, dozens of people were stranded by the flooding.

"Our region gets hit with heavy rain every year, but I have never experienced anything like this," city employee Kumi Takesue said.

"Rice paddies and roads all became water so you couldn't tell what was what," she said, adding that she had to wade in knee-high water, even near her home, which was not as hard hit as other areas.

Kyodo News service said 28 people have died and police were searching for four missing people in the three prefectures of Kumamoto, Oita and Fukuoka, from the heavy rainfall that began Thursday. Nationwide tallies of the dead and missing were not immediately available.

Weather officials warned people to be careful even in areas where rain had subsided because the land was still mushy and prone to landslides. More rain was possible later Monday.

Even as some of the water subsided, homes and farms on the southern island of Kyushu, hardest hit by the flooding, were still getting food shipments, although mostly by land, local officials said.

The intense rain occurred as far north as the ancient capital of Kyoto, where rainfall exceeded 90 millimeters (3.5 inches) per hour—a condition in which rain cascades in such torrents that seeing ahead becomes impossible.

Evacuation orders were gradually being lifted, allowing most residents to return home by late Sunday.

Fukuoka prefecture said that as of Monday, damage there extended to more than 4,300 homes, 800 roads and 20 bridges. At least 518 landslides were recorded, and more than 2,700 people had evacuated their homes, it said in a statement.

Reshuffle puts N. Korean leader's mark on military

By FOSTER KLUG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea is reshuffling its most powerful institution, the military, dismissing its army chief—a key mentor to young ruler Kim Jong Un—and promoting a little-known general to an important position in the million-man force.

Illness was the reason cited for army chief Ri Yong Ho's departure, but to some outside analysts it resembled a purge by Kim as he tries to shape the government he inherited seven months ago. The announcement Tuesday of Hyon Yong Chol's promotion could further that goal; his is the fourth vice marshal appointment North Korea has made public since the death of Kim's father, Kim Jong Il.

The changes have significant but as yet unclear implications for the authoritarian nation's relationship with its neighbors and the United States, which stations more than 28,000 troops in ally South Korea. North Korea maintains one of the world's largest armies, builds up its nuclear weapons and missile programs despite broad condemnation and sanctions, and regularly flings warlike rhetoric at Seoul and Washington.

News of Hyon's promotion in the Korean People's Army followed the announcement Monday that Ri, a vice marshal who had been chief of the General Staff of the army since 2009, was dismissed from his high-ranking posts in the military and the Workers' Party because of illness, according to state media. No details were provided about who might succeed Ri as army chief.

Ri had been at Kim Jong Un's side throughout his transition to leadership and after his father's death, and appeared healthy in a public appearance just days ago. Analysts were skeptical about the official explanation for his abrupt departure.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Tens of thousands rally in Japan to end nuke power

TOKYO (AP)—Tens of thousands of people rallied at a Tokyo park Monday demanding that Japan abandon nuclear power as the country prepares to restart another reactor shut down after last year's tsunami caused meltdowns at the Fukushima power plant. Led by Nobel-winning novelist Kenzaburo Oe, pop star Ryuichi Sakamoto and visual artist Yoshitomo Nara, the protesters expressed outrage over a report that blamed the Fukushima disaster on Japan's culture of "reflexive obedience" and held no individuals responsible. Japan ordered all its nuclear power plants shut down for safety inspections after last year's March tsunami and earthquake set off multiple meltdowns at Fukushima Dai-ichi plant. Some 150,000 people evacuated from a 20-kilometer (12-mile) zone around the plant because of radiation fears, and the area is deemed unsafe to live in more than a year later.

16 die in Nepal's 2nd major bus crash in 2 days

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—A bus veered off a highway and plunged into a river Monday, killing at least 16 people and injuring several more in Nepal's second road disaster in as many days. The bus rolled some 100 meters (330 feet) from the highway and plunged Monday in the Trishuli river about 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Katmandu, the capital. Six bodies were pulled from the wreckage and three people died on the way to the hospital. Rescuers were able to pull seven more bodies from the swollen river later in the day. It was not clear how many people had been on the bus, but rescuers continued to search the river for missing passengers. The river was flooded by the heavy monsoon rainfall, making the search difficult. Police are investigating the cause, but it was raining heavily at 4 a.m. when the accident occurred.

28 New Zealand gold miners rescued after fire

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Twenty-eight miners were rescued from a New Zealand gold mine Tuesday after a fire trapped the men underground for up to seven hours. A truck engine caught fire early Tuesday at the Trio mine in the North Island town of Waihi. Mine officials said the ventilation system pumped smoke through the mine and it could be seen coming out the vent shaft. Initially, 28 men were trapped about 150 meters (500 feet) underground in safety chambers. After more than 5 hours, 13 men taking refuge in two safety chambers were rescued. After seven hours, the remaining men in a third chamber were also rescued. Mine spokesman Kit Wilson said one man was being checked by medical officials for suspected smoke inhalation but the rest are fine.

World

Syrian rebels push war into capital Damascus

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian rebels fired grenades at tanks and troops while regime armor shelled Damascus neighborhoods on Monday, sending terrified families fleeing the most sustained and widespread fighting in the capital since the start of the uprising 16 months ago.

A ring of fierce clashes nearly encircled the heavily guarded capital as rebels seeking to overthrow President Bashar Assad pushed the civil war that has been building in Syria's impoverished provinces closer to the seat of power.

While the clashes were focused in a string of neighborhoods in the city's southwest, for many of its 4 million people the violence brought scarily close to home the strife that has deeply scarred other Syrian cities.

In high-end downtown cafes frequented by the business and government elite tightly bound to the Assad regime, customers watched as black smoke billowed on the horizon and the boom of government shells reverberated in the distance.

"Without a doubt, this is all anyone is talking about today," a Damascus activist who gave his name as Noor Bitar said via Skype. "The sounds of war are clear throughout the city. They are bouncing off the buildings."

Syria's violence has grown increasingly bloody and chaotic in recent months as the uprising has morphed from a peaceful protest movement seeking political change into an armed insurgency seeking to topple the regime by force.

Anti-regime activists say more than 17,000 people have been killed, and the government says it has lost more than 4,000 security officers. It does not provide numbers of civilian dead.

International diplomacy has failed to stop the violence, and world powers remain deeply divided over who is responsible and how to stop it. The U.S. and many Western nations have called on Assad to leave power, while Russia, China and Iran have stood by the regime.

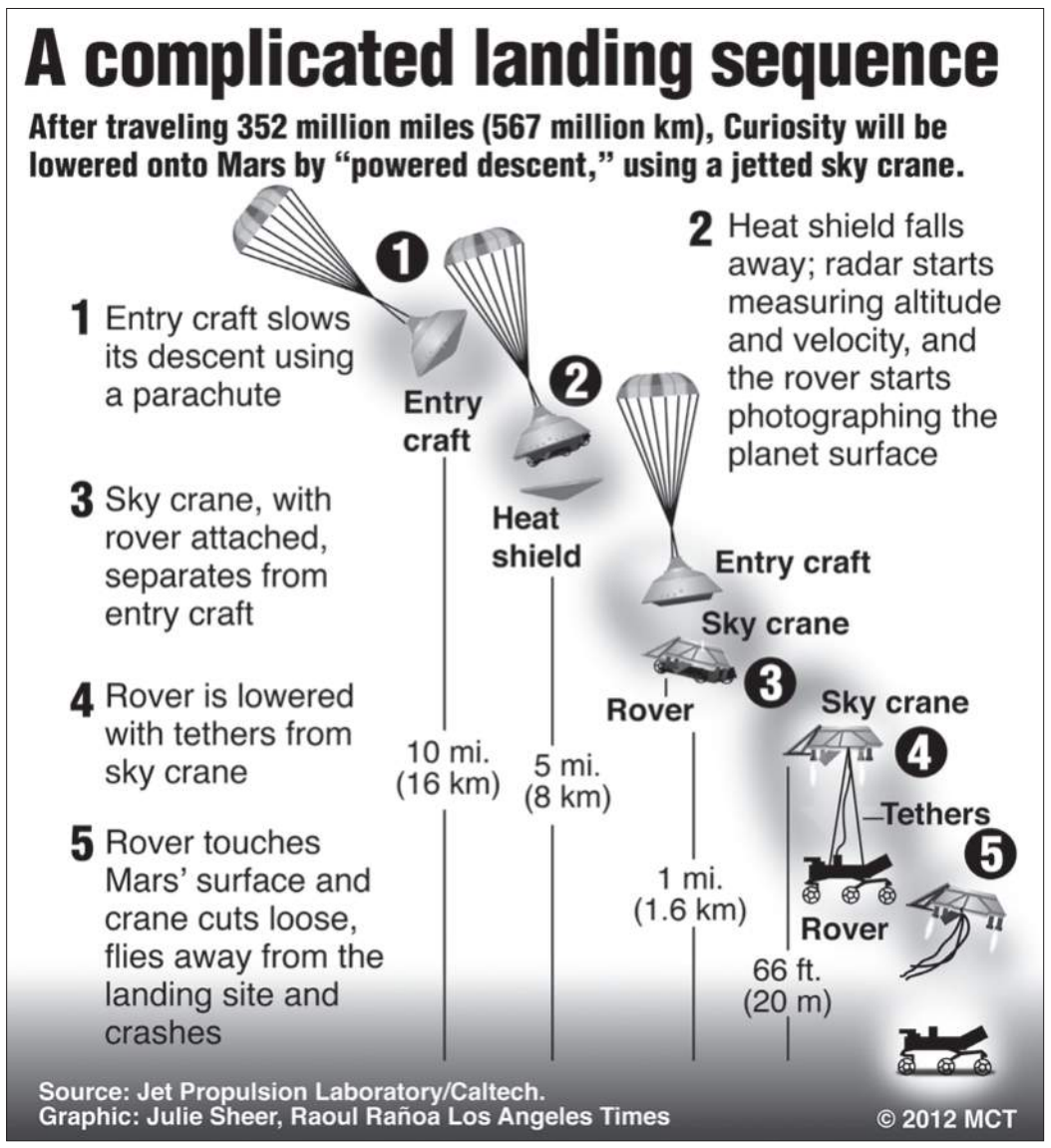
On Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the West of using blackmail to secure a U.N. Security Council resolution that could allow the use of force in Syria.

Lavrov objected to the text of a Western-backed resolution that calls for sanctions and invokes Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which can be enforceable militarily.

He said Russia had been told that if it opposed the resolution, Western nations would not extend the mandate of a U.N. mission sent to Syria to monitor a cease-fire.

"We consider it to be an absolutely counterproductive and dangerous approach," Lavrov said.

Mars rover landing seen in early August


A complicated landing sequence
After traveling 352 million miles (567 million km), Curiosity will be lowered onto Mars by "powered descent," using a jetted sky crane.
1 Entry craft slows its descent using a parachute
2 Heat shield falls away; radar starts measuring altitude and velocity, and the rover starts photographing the planet surface
3 Sky crane, with rover attached, separates from entry craft
4 Rover is lowered with tethers from sky crane
5 Rover touches Mars' surface and crane cuts loose, flies away from the landing site and crashes
Entry craft
Heat shield
Entry craft
Sky crane
Rover
Sky crane
Tethers
Rover
10 mi. (16 km)
5 mi. (8 km)
1 mi. (1.6 km)
66 ft. (20 m)
Source: Jet Propulsion Laboratory/Caltech.
Graphic: Julie Sheer, Raoul Rañoa Los Angeles Times
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WASHINGTON (MCT)—In the early morning hours of Aug. 6, NASA and space enthusiasts across the world will be able to monitor the Mars landing of the most advanced robot ever to be sent to another world.

Named Curiosity, the robot—or "rover"—has been heading toward Mars for nearly eight months. The landing is scheduled for 1:31 a.m. EDT.

"Is it crazy? Not so much," said Doug McCuistion, the director of the Mars Exploration Program. "Is it risky? Landing on Mars is always risky. … Every landing is unique. Every landing is like a first."

At a news conference Monday, NASA scientists said they were looking for evidence that life existed on Mars billions of years ago. This evidence could include indicators of water, sources of energy or sources of carbon—all of which are essential to sustain life.

Curiosity was launched into space last Nov. 26 from Cape Canaveral, Fla. The rover will go from 13,000 mph to zero in seven minutes, and will land in Gale Crater, which NASA scientists think held water billions of years ago.

In the middle of Gale is Mount Sharp, a mountain that's taller than any in the Lower 48 U.S. states, said John Grotzinger, a NASA scientist who's working on the mission. Curiosity will explore the crater and the mountain, looking for clues of life.

"I see it as an extraordinary opportunity to get a bearing on our own existence on Earth," Grotzinger said. "Ascending Mount Sharp, we're going to go through the major eras in the … history of Mars that give us the basis for comparison to our own planet."

Grotzinger is aware that a lot is riding on the mission, given NASA's shifting budget priorities.

"I think we all feel this incredible sense of pressure on MSL to do something grand and profound," he said, referring to the Mars Science Laboratory division of NASA. "I think it's going to be thrilling."

The precision of the landing is a significant improvement from previous Mars missions, said Pete Theisinger, a project manager at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. Helped by better communications technology, scientists will be able to land Curiosity within a very small range, on top of the most valuable scientific resource in the crater.

The entry process also is greatly improved, Theisinger said. In missions in the 1970s, the rover approached the Martian surface "falling like a rock," he said. Curiosity will provide both black and white and color panoramic, high resolution photos of the Martian surface as well as of Gale Crater and Mount Sharp.

US Navy ship fires on boat off Dubai, killing 1

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—U.S. Navy gunners aboard a refueling ship opened fire on a small boat racing toward them in broad daylight Monday near the Gulf city of Dubai, killing one person and injuring three.

The rare shooting not far from approaches to the Strait of Hormuz comes at a period of heightened tensions between the United States and nearby Iran.

A UAE official said the vessel was a fishing boat. It was unclear why it might have veered so close to an armed American vessel.

There was no immediate sign of Iranian involvement, or any indication that the incident was a reprise of al-Qaida's 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen. But the incident will likely focus further attention on the risks American vessels face in the Gulf even as the Navy beefs up its presence in the region.

Lt. Greg Raelson, a spokesman for the Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, said a security team aboard the USNS Rappahannock issued a series of warnings before resorting to lethal force about 10 miles (15 kilometers) off the coast of Dubai's Jebel Ali port.

"The U.S. crew repeatedly attempted to warn the vessel's operators to turn away from their deliberate approach. When those efforts failed to deter the approaching vessel, the security team on the Rappahannock fired rounds from a .50-caliber machine gun," he said.

Raelson said the incident, which happened at 2:50 p.m. local time, is under investigation.

The Rappahannock is an oiler used to fuel other Navy ships while they are at sea.

The United Arab Emirates, which includes the commercial hub of Dubai and the oil-rich capital Abu Dhabi, is a key American ally in the Gulf. American warships frequently visit Jebel Ali port, a popular rest stop among U.S. sailors.

A U.S. consular official told The Associated Press that one person was killed and three wounded in the shooting.

The official gave no other details, but it appeared that Navy personnel could have seen the boat—mistakenly or not—as a threat in Gulf waters not far from Iran's maritime boundaries. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the incident between the two allies.

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia accuses West of blackmail on Syria plans

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia on Monday accused the West of effectively using blackmail to secure a new U.N. Security Council resolution that threatens sanctions and could open the door for possible future use of military force to end Syria's civil war. The Security Council is deeply divided over a new resolution on Syria as international envoy Kofi Annan's plan for halting the fighting appears dead and the violence in the Arab state escalates. The international Red Cross formally declared the conflict in Syria a civil war over the weekend, which paves the way for potential war crimes prosecutions. The debate comes ahead of the July 20 expiration of the mandate for the 300-strong U.N. observer force that was deployed to Syria to monitor implementation of Annan's six-point peace plan and a cease-fire.

2 Americans kidnapped in Egypt's Sinai are freed

EL-ARISH, Egypt (AP)—Two American tourists and their Egyptian guide who were abducted by a Bedouin in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula last week were released unharmed on Monday after negotiations with security officials and tribal leaders. Rev. Michel Louis, 61, and 39-year-old Lissa Alphonse, both Boston-area residents, had been kidnapped from a bus on Friday along with their guide, Haytham Ragab, on a Sinai road by a Bedouin who was demanding the release of his uncle, who had been detained by Egyptian police on suspicion of drug possession. The kidnapper, Jirmy Abu-Masuh, told AP that he had handed the three over to security officials near the northern Sinai city of el-Arish on Monday after he was promised that authorities were working on his uncle's release.

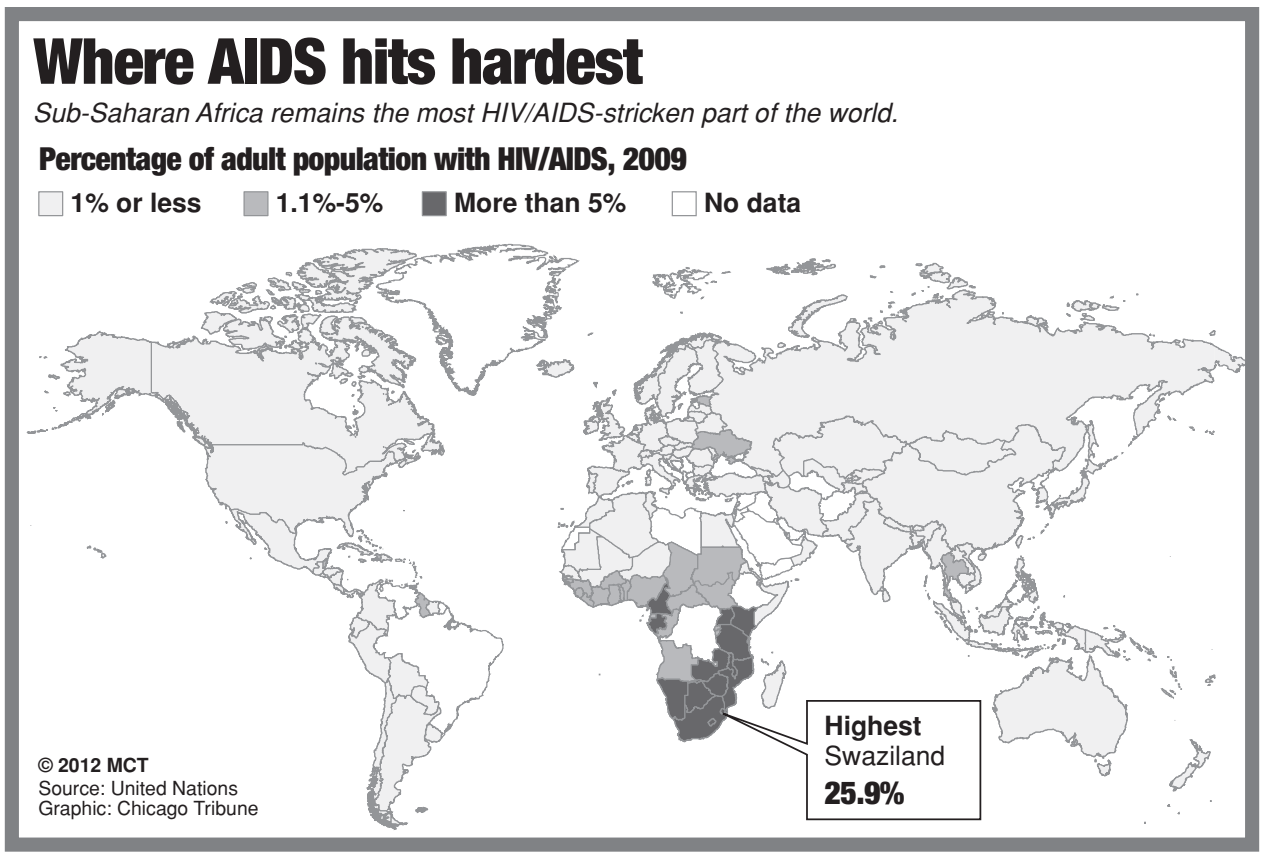
2 Libyan journalists freed after abduction

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP)—A local Libyan TV station manager says two of his journalists have been freed after more than a week being held captive by militiamen from a onetime stronghold of ousted ruler Moammar Gadhafi. Omar Boghada of Misrata's TV station says the two journalists, held for 10 days by militiamen from the town of Bani Walid, have returned home. The two were covering the country's general election 10 days ago when they were snatched on their way back to Misrata. Their release defuses tension that could have turned into a battle between Bani Walid and the city of Misrata, whose militiamen deployed forces, threatening to launch an offensive. Bani Walid and Misrata had a history of enmity under Gadhafi's 42-year dictatorship.

Heathrow handles record numbers for Olympics

LONDON (AP)—Athletes, officials and media from all over the world poured into Heathrow Airport on Monday for the London Olympics, the first wave of a record number of passengers expected to pass through Europe's largest airport for the games that begin July 27. Heathrow says athletes from 50 nations will touch down in what is being described as Britain's biggest peacetime transport challenge. In all, the airport will handle some 236,955 passengers, breaking the previous daily record of 233,562 set in July 2011. To cope with the deluge, Heathrow has enlisted some 1,000 volunteers to greet arrivals—500 were working on Monday alone—and created special teams to deal with oversize items like Olympic javelins, bikes and other sports equipment. All wore bright pink to easily stand out. The London Olympics start July 27 and end Aug. 12.

Focus



New optimism about stemming spread of AIDS VIRUS

In this photo taken June 27, 2012, Katherine Tapp, 26 of New York City uses an oral test for HIV, inside the HIV Testing Room at the Penn Branch of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles, in southeast Washington.

AP

WASHINGTON (AP)—An AIDS-free generation: It seems an audacious goal, considering how the HIV epidemic still is raging around the world.

Yet more than 20,000 international HIV researchers and activists will gather in the nation's capital later this month with a sense of optimism not seen in many years—hope that it finally may be possible to dramatically stem the spread of the AIDS virus.

"We want to make sure we don't overpromise," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the National Institutes of Health's infectious disease chief, told The Associated Press. But, he said, "I think we are at a turning point."

The big new focus is on trying to get more people with HIV treated early, when they're first infected, instead of waiting until they're weakened or sick, as the world largely has done until now. Staying healthier also makes them less likely to infect others.

"It saves lives of people who are infected, and it saves lives of people by not allowing them to get infected," Fauci explained.

That's a tall order. But studies over the past two years have shown what Fauci calls "striking, sometimes breathtaking results," in preventing people at high risk of HIV from getting it in some of the hardest-hit countries, using this treatment-as-prevention and some other protections.

Now, as the International AIDS Conference returns to the U.S. for the first time in 22 years, the question is whether the world will come up with the money and the know-how to put the best combinations of protections into practice, for AIDS-ravaged poor countries and hot spots in developed nations as well.

"We have the tools to make it happen," said Dr. Elly Katabira, president of the International AIDS Society, which organizes the world's largest HIV conference, set for July 22-27. He points to strides already in Botswana and Rwanda in increasing access to AIDS drugs.

But Fauci cautioned that moving those tools into everyday life is "a daunting challenge," given the costs of medications and the difficulty in getting people to take them for years despite poverty and other competing health and social problems.

In the U.S., part of that challenge is complacency. Despite 50,000 new HIV infections here every year, an AP-GfK poll finds that very few people in the United States worry about getting the virus.

Also, HIV increasingly is an epidemic of the poor, minorities and urban areas such as the District of Columbia, where the rate of infection rivals some developing countries. The conference will spotlight this city's aggressive steps to fight back: A massive effort to find the undiagnosed, with routine testing in some hospitals, testing vans that roam the streets, even free tests at a Department of Motor Vehicles office, and then rapidly getting those patients into care.

"These are the true champions," Dr. Mohammed Akhter, director of the city's health department, said of patients who faithfully take their medication. "They're also protecting their community."

A few miles east of the Capitol and the tourist-clogged monuments, the Community Education Group's HIV testing van pulls into a parking lot in a low-income neighborhood with a particularly high infection rate. An incentive for the crowd at a nearby corner is the offer of a $10 supermarket gift card for getting tested.

Christopher Freeman, 23, is first in line. He was tested earlier this year and says showing off that official paper proclaiming him HIV-negative attracts "the ladies."

"Forget money, it's the best thing you can show them," he said.

But that test was months ago, and Freeman admits he seldom uses condoms. He climbs into the van and rubs a swab over his gums. Twenty minutes later, he's back for the result: Good news—no HIV. But counselor Amanda Matthews has Freeman go through a list of the risk factors; it's education to try to keep him and his future partners safe.

"Just try to get yourself in the habit of using condoms," she said. "You say it's hard to use condoms but what if you do contract the virus? Then you've got to take medications every day."

Freeman waves his new test result with a grin, and walks off with a handful of free condoms.

At a nearby bus stop, counselor Laila Patrick encounters a little resistance while handing out condoms, when a woman says that encourages sex outside of marriage.

"Stopping AIDS is everyone's business. You're looking out for the next person," Patrick said. "You might just want to help someone be safe."

About 34 million people worldwide have HIV, including almost 1.2 million Americans. It's a very different epidemic from the last time the International AIDS Conference came to the United States, in 1990. Life-saving drugs emerged a few years later, turning HIV from a death sentence into a manageable chronic disease for people and countries that can afford the medications.

Yet for all the improvements in HIV treatment, the rate of new infections in the U.S. has held steady for about a decade. About 1 in 5 Americans with HIV don't know they have it, more than 200,000 people who unwittingly can spread the virus.

Government figures show most new U.S. infections are among gay and bisexual men, followed by heterosexual black women. Of particular concern, African-Americans account for about 14 percent of the population but 44 percent of new HIV infections.

Your ZIP code plays a role in your risk, too. Twelve cities account for more than 40 percent of the nation's AIDS cases: New York, Los Angeles, Washington, Chicago, Atlanta, Miami, Philadelphia, Houston, San Francisco, Baltimore, Dallas and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Many are concentrated in specific parts of those cities.

"Maps tell the story," said Brown University assistant professor Amy Nunn, who is beginning a campaign that will bring a testing van door-to-door in the hardest-hit Philadelphia ZIP code.

"It's not just what you do, it's also where you live. There's just a higher chance that you will come into contact with the virus," she explained.

Prospects for a vaccine are so far elusive and health disparities are widening, so why the optimism as expressed by the Obama administration's goal of getting to an AIDS-free generation?

Consider the potential strategies, to add to tried-and-true steps such as condom use and treating HIV-infected pregnant women to protect their unborn babies:

■ Studies found treatment-as-prevention could lower an HIV patient's chance of spreading the virus to an uninfected sexual partner by a stunning 96 percent. In the U.S., new guidelines recommend starting treatment early rather than waiting until the immune system has weakened. Abroad, the United Nations hopes to more than double the number of patients being treated in poor countries to 15 million by 2015.

■ Other studies show a longtime AIDS medication named Truvada can prevent infection, too, if taken daily by healthy people who are at risk from their infected sexual partners. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is expected to decide by fall whether to formally approve sale of Truvada as an HIV preventive.

■ A study from South Africa found a vaginal gel containing anti-AIDS medication helped protect women when their infected partners wouldn't use a condom, generating more interest in developing women-controlled protection.

■ Globally, experts also stress male circumcision, to lower men's risk of heterosexually acquired HIV.

Testing is a key step in improving prevention. The AP-GfK poll found 57 percent of adults say they've been tested at some point, a bit higher than federal estimates, but not enough. The government recommends at least one test for adults, and that populations at higher risk get tested at least once a year.

Following those recommendations depends in part on people's concern about AIDS. The poll found just over half of Americans consider HIV as much or more of a problem now than two decades ago. But less than 20 percent are worried about getting it themselves, and even populations at higher risk don't consider HIV a big threat. Some 16 percent of black respondents said they're very worried about HIV, compared with 4 percent of whites.

"We've become complacent about HIV in America, and it's a real tragedy because hundreds of thousands of people in our own country aren't getting the care they need," said Chris Collins of amFAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research.

The drugs can cost up to $15,000 a year in the U.S., and overall treatment costs are rising as people with HIV live longer. In developing countries, those drugs can cost less than $400 a year.

The AP-GfK Poll was conducted June 14-18 by GfK Roper Public Affairs and Corporate Communications. It involved landline and cellphone interviews with 1,007 adults nationwide. Results for the full sample have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.0 percentage points.

In the U.S., the government is targeting the hardest-hit communities as part of a plan to reduce HIV infections by 25 percent by 2015, said Assistant Secretary of Health Howard Koh. Work is under way to learn the best steps to get people treated early, including in cities such as Washington, where 2.7 percent of residents have HIV, roughly four times the national rate.

Washington resident Zee Turner knows it's hard to stick with care. She's had HIV for two decades, learning the news when her baby was born sick. Health workers helped mom and daughter receive then-newly emerging treatments, and they're doing well today.

"I felt that I should get out here and try to help somebody else, because somebody had to help us get into care," said Turner, now 53 and a community health worker.

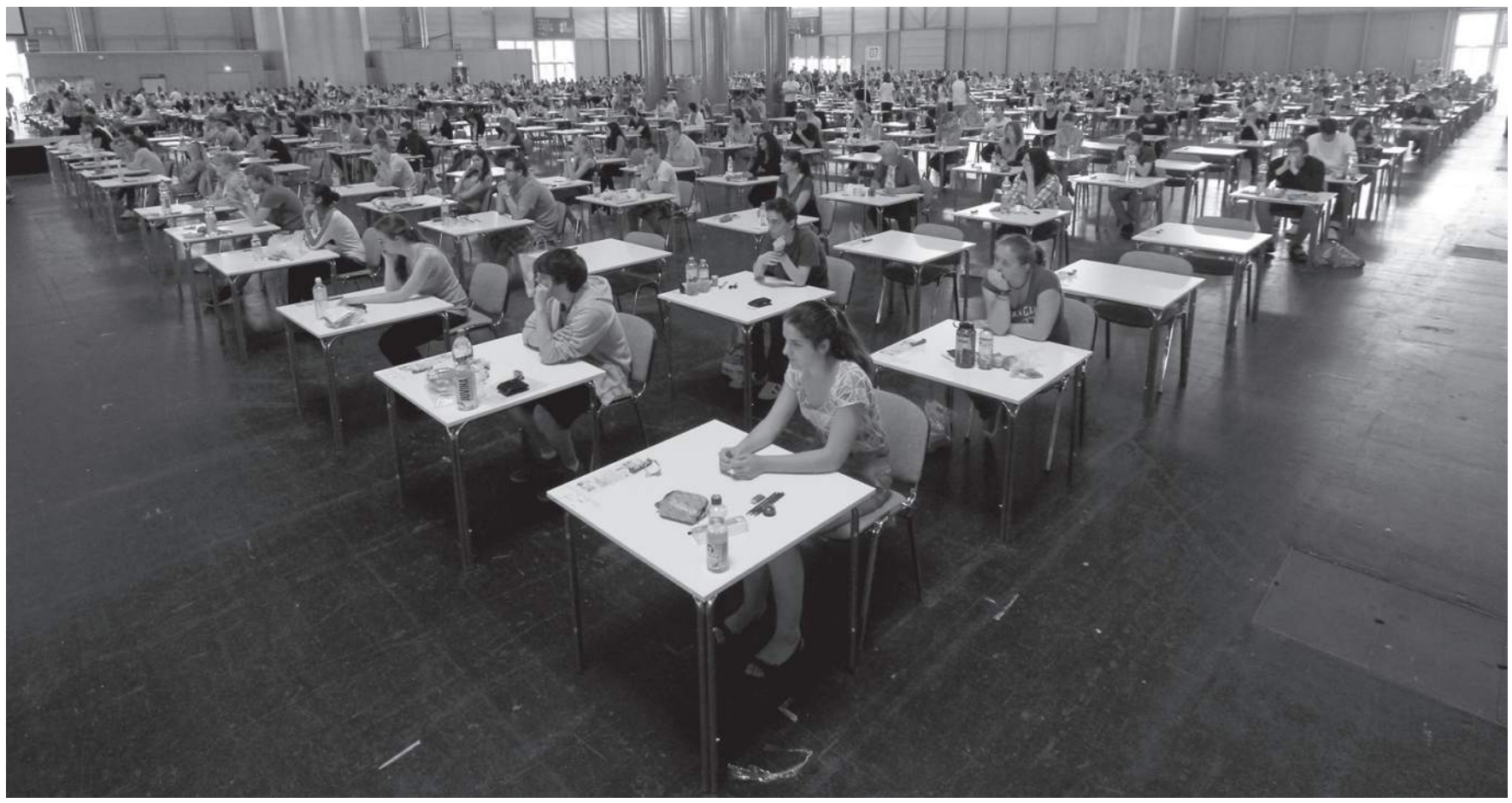
The city's latest HIV count suggests progress, with a slight decrease in new diagnoses and a majority of patients being connected with medical care. Community workers such as Turner are called to try to help people stay on treatment when other problems intervene.

"If they're on drugs, I take them to the drug program. If they need help going on Medicaid, I go with them to Medicaid," Turner said. "Any problem they have, I'm going to try to fix it and get them back into care."

Campus Life

Austria med school gives women grading edge

By GEORGE JAHN
ASSOCIATED PRESS



Some 5419 candidates await the start of aptitude tests for the studies of medicine and dentistry at the University of Vienna, in Vienna, Austria, on Friday, July 6, 2012. AP

VIENNA (AP)—Antonio Bandera took a last nervous drag on his smoke Friday as he readied himself for the grueling eight-hour entrance exam for elite Vienna Medical University. Making the cut's hard enough, he said, and this year his chances may be even smaller: The university is grading men and women differently based on gender.

"It's not right to give one sex or the other the advantage," he said. "How you score should determine how your chances are."

The university's policy is apparently unique in Europe. Those responsible for giving women a grading edge are aware that it could expose the institution to EU legal action, on charges of discrimination, but they argue that it's needed to even the playing field. Since the Vienna medical school introduced its current entrance exam six years ago, they say, women on average have scored significantly lower each time than men.

"There is no women's bonus," insisted vice dean Karin Gutierrrez-Lobos. Nearby, a long line of candidates clutching water bottles and snacks snaked their way toward the cavernous Vienna Fairgrounds Hall set up for 5,419 hopefuls vying for 740 places.

Critics say that Gutierrez-Lobos' point of view is debatable.

Student representative Christian Orashe said the new system is skewed precisely because it compensates for the fact that women score traditionally lower on average than men and the average is used as a departure point for how well each candidate scores. As a hypothetical example, if a man and a woman both score 130 points, the woman would be given a test grade of 117.7 compared to 114.8 for the man, based on separate averages of 102 points for males and 97 points for females.

The woman thus "is placed in the rankings clearly about 50 to 100 places ahead of her male competitor," Orasche said. That, he argued, is significant considering only 17 percent of those applying this year will be let in to study medicine or dentistry.

University statistics from last year document the conundrum: While 56 percent of those taking the exam were women, only 43 percent were accepted. Orasche noted that similar entrance exams in Germany and Switzerland have not revealed that significant a gap; he said education experts believe the problem lies within the country's secondary school system. In any case, he argued that the Austrian university's solution "results in a noticeable discrimination against both sexes."

"Female medicine students could be labeled as 'quota women' in the future even if they did not profit from the gender-specific evaluation," he said.

Not only men taking Friday's exam agreed with that view.

"I don't want to be able to become a doctor only because I fit a quota," said Katarina Hobl. "I want to become a doctor on the basis of my achievements."

Dr. Henry M. Sondheimer, senior director for student affairs and programs at the Association of American Medical Colleges, said his organization has long "publicly acknowledged" that women tend to perform less well than men on standard multiple-choice tests of the kind being used by the Vienna university. He said that's why such tests in the United States are paired with personal interviews in evaluating who is accepted and who rejected. Austria's medical schools don't have interviews as part of the admissions process.

"They treat women individually, they treat men individually and the fact that there is a small (but) significant difference in these standardized test scores has no significant difference" in U.S. admissions, he said. As a matter of fact, he said, "interviews topped everything" in a survey of U.S. admissions deans asked about what counted most in getting into medical school.

Gutierrez-Lobos said interviews to gauge social competence—where women normally do better than men—are being considered in the future as Vienna and other Austrian medical universities work to standardize their qualification standards. But that is of little comfort for those sitting for the exams this year.

Orasche, the student representative, said his organization is ready to offer support all the way up to the European Court of Justice, the EU's highest arbiter. And Josef Marko, a law professor engaged by Orasche to research the issue said he already has found two rulings by the court that would support such a complaint.

Gutierrez-Lobos, in turn, said that the university is ready to defend its decision, setting the scene for a possible legal battle with Europe-wide implications.

"It's not at all a case of women being given the advantage," she said. "But if there are any legal uncertainties then this just will have to be decided in court."

Out-of-class learning equals college credit

By LAURA DIAMOND
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

ATLANTA—Tracy Martin long considered going to college but worried about the time and cost.

The 52-year-old decided to enroll after hearing about "prior learning," which lets adults earn free credits toward a degree for college-level learning that occurred outside a traditional classroom, such as on the job, in the military or through corporate training.

Colleges in Georgia and across the country are awarding prior-learning credits to help older students earn degrees more quickly and more cheaply.

The state is working to increase the number of degree holders because about 60 percent of future jobs will require a post-secondary education, while only 42 percent of Georgians have one.

Not everyone has welcomed this change. Critics say prior learning works better for vocational programs in which the goal is to certify people with specific skills.

Trish Paterson, executive director for college access initiatives for the University System of Georgia, said prior learning isn't just giving students credit for life experience. Colleges that choose to offer the credit measure what students know, review how that corresponds with courses they are required to take and determine whether their knowledge merits college credit, she said.

"We are honoring what a student knows even if we are not the reason why they know it," Paterson said. "This is some radical change for the world of higher education." Johann Neem, an associate professor of history at Western Washington University, said students who receive prior-learning credits miss out on the knowledge gained in the classroom by interacting with professors and classmates.

Class discussions are just as important as tests, papers and reading assignments because they expose students to new perspectives and challenge them to think differently, he said.

"At the end of the day, we want students to leave not just with new knowledge and skills, but with a sense of curiosity and wonder," Neem said. "That means that the class experience is vital to cultivating the intellectual character that ultimately defines what it means to be a college graduate." Students will be required to take college classes, Georgia officials say. They can receive up to 30 credits through prior learning, and most degrees require at least 120.

Students typically earn three to eight credits for prior learning, said Jerry Merwin, director of adult academic degree completion at Valdosta State University.

That's as much as $1,262 in saved tuition at Valdosta State.

Students who want prior-learning credit take a course, now offered at 13 colleges in the University System. It teaches how to prepare a portfolio to show why they deserve credit.

Merwin was the first professor to teach it, in 2008. Colleges developed learning goals for about 30 courses ranging from nursing to criminal justice to American Sign Language. Students review the goals and syllabi to see if their skills and knowledge match up, he said.

So far, 83 students have earned 312 credits hours through prior-learning assessment, according to university system data. The system enrolls about 318,000 students.

Faculty trained to assess the portfolios review them and recommend whether students deserve credit. Faculty assessors do the bulk of the work, but recommendations are reviewed by others, Merwin said.

The University System has trained 245 faculty and staff in prior-learning assessments, and Paterson said more colleges will soon participate.

Martin, who is working toward a degree in media studies at Gainesville State College, earned credit for introduction to film by turning in a DVD of her short films and other professional work. She's hoping to receive credit for theater appreciation because of her experience acting on stage.

"It's painful to sit in class and sit through something you could teach," Martin said. "It's expensive, too."

The University System has long used prior learning as a way to award college credit to veterans and those serving in the military.

It works with the American Council of Education, which reviews military training and experiences and makes credit recommendations.

More than 2,300 colleges recognize the transcripts the group produces.

Some faculty have a difficult time accepting that students can learn material from someone other than them, Merwin said.

"It is hard to say there is one best way of learning information," Merwin said. "There was a lot of skepticism with online learning, but now there is comfort with it and we see the advantages and benefits of different types of learning for different types of students."

Life & Style

In this July 7, 2012, photo, from left, actor Morgan Freeman, actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt, actress Anne Hathaway, director Christopher Nolan, actor Christian Bale, actor Gary Oldman, and actor Michael Caine, from the upcoming film "The Dark Knight Rises," pose during a photo shoot in Beverly Hills, Calif. Inset shows Christian Bale as Batman in a scene from the action thriller "The Dark Knight Rises." AP

'Dark Knight Rises' says goodbye, Batman

The Batmobile goes into long-term parking Friday as "The Dark Knight Rises"—the much, much anticipated follow-up to Christopher Nolan's two previous mega-grossing Caped Crusader movies—launches its all-out assault on Gotham City, box-office records and the audience's sense of equilibrium. Although Hollywood is never allergic to revisiting a successful franchise (see "The Amazing Spider-Man"), Nolan has said that this is the last Bat trip for him. Which means saying adieu to a lot of characters who have become familiar since "Batman Begins" premiered in 2005.

"We knew after 'Batman Begins' there'd be another movie and we knew after "The Dark Knight' there would be another movie. And we knew after this that there wouldn't be another movie," said Morgan Freeman, who has played Wayne Enterprises brain trust Lucius Fox in all three installments. And is he feeling bittersweet?

"No, actually, and I don't want to sound ungrateful for the experience, but it's the end of something—the end of making a movie. And when they say 'It's a wrap' you walk away. Those of us who've been in all three are of the opinion we can't top ourselves, so let's walk away with our laurels."

"It must be a bittersweet kind of reality for the studio," quipped actor Gary Oldman whose Police Commissioner Gordon—whom Oldman has played three times—has a more central role in the new film. "But I think in a way Chris is retiring as the heavyweight champion. He'll go out with a bang, and that's the way to do it." He said he didn't know what Nolan's next act would be, but "my instinct is he'll make something much smaller."

It would hard to go much bigger. About half the 160-minute film was shot in the IMAX format (as opposed to 28 minutes of "The Dark Knight"). The opening sequence—involving a midair hijacking/kidnapping—will likely be regarded as a classic. The vehicles are cooler and do cooler things. (The Tumbler, aka Batmobile, returns, and Catwoman gets to ride a Bat-pod.) The wreckage is more extensive. And, for good measure, there's a nuclear explosion.

Gotham City, in short, is in hot water: When we last visited, Batman (Christian Bale) was being blamed for the murder of District Attorney Harvey Dent—who, in his grief and suffering, had become the vengeful Two-Face. Now, eight years later, Batman, hobbled and downbeat, has gone into seclusion at stately Wayne Manor. Crime is on the upswing. Terrorists are on the loose. Questions are on our minds.

Why exactly did Batman have to take the blame? Why is Gordon keeping the big secret about Harvey Dent? Why is a terrorist named Bane—whose name seems intended to provoke Mitt Romney jokes—wreaking havoc across Gotham City?

All these questions and more may in fact be answered with the arrival of "The Dark Knight Rises." But don't count on it.

That old Hollywood pragmatist Samuel Goldwyn once said, "If you want to send a message, call Western Union." One might add, "If you want to send a mixed message, call Christopher Nolan." Certainly, there are viewers who say they understand Nolan's visually arresting "Inception" (2010); there are also people who say they understand "Finnegans Wake."

With "The Dark Knight Rises"—co-written with his brother, Jonathan—Nolan may further his reputation as a director whose plot lines exist only to serve his visual art. Bane (Tom Hardy) and his fellow terrorists, acting like a muscle-bound Occupy Movement, attack Wall Street and its ruling 1 percenters, but their supposed anti-capitalist policies are soon exposed as a mere ploy, a means of terrorizing Gotham into subservience. Why do they want to take over Gotham City in the first place? It's not entirely clear. But when the Gotham police force starts charging down Wall Street to save the world, "The Dark Knight Rises" starts to feel like a campaign ad from a right-wing super-PAC. (Nolan, who doesn't like a lot of computer effects, filmed in downtown Manhattan during Occupy Wall Street, and the film has the sense of being filled up with real people.)

"It's certainly interesting, isn't it?" Freeman said. "Chris Nolan could very well have gotten some inspiration from some of the current stuff that was going. But it's a little dangerous speculating about a writer's intentions." Nolan has said in the past that "The Dark Knight Rises" was inspired by Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities"; What the film suggests is that something like Occupy would lead to the murderous excesses of the French Revolution.

But excess is in the DNA of the Batman chronicles. So is moral ambiguity: Is there something dubious, we always asked, about a masked avenger taking the law into his own hands? Yes, and it's been part of the Batman story at least as far back as the Frank Miller graphic novels, which built on the Bob Kane original, but without Kane's more black-and-white take on goodness and virtue.

Nolan takes it a step further: In "The Dark Knight Rises," Hardy plays the villainous Bane behind a mask that suggests Hannibal Lecter and is said to provide a steady stream of anesthetic to numb his constant pain (inflicted when ... no, you have to wait). As a side effect, it also makes him crazier.

But Bane believes in what he's doing. And so does Batman. Both Bane and Batman wear masks. Both their voices are distorted by their disguises. They both suffer excruciating pain (Batman has to go through major rehabilitation in "The Dark Knight Rises" before he can once again answer the Bat Signal). In some ways, you might say, they're the same guy—which may be Nolan's mischievous last word on the whole subject.

A WEALTH OF CHARACTERS

Like any big American movie, "The Dark Knight Rises" has its "stars"—in this case, Christian Bale as Batman, Anne Hathaway as Catwoman and Joseph Gordon-Levitt as the Robin-like police officer John Blake. But in what suggests classic Hollywood studio tradition, the film also features a wealth of name actors in character roles—performers who can, and have, starred in their own films, and can contribute their own fan base to the "Dark Knight" pot. The following are just a few of the bigger names, in a cast that also includes Tom Hardy, Juno Temple and Tom Conti.

■ MICHAEL CAINE
(Alfred Pennyworth)
The English Morgan Freeman, Caine has played everywhere and for everyone, including Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Woody Allen and Alfonso Cuarón. His roles range from the title characters in "Alfie," "Get Carter" and "Harry Brown" to Mr. Morgan (in the upcoming "Mr. Morgan's Last Love").

■ MORGAN FREEMAN
(Lucius Fox)
The American Michael Caine, Freeman is everywhere, and that's good: He's currently starring in "The Magic of Belle Isle," won a supporting actor Oscar for "Million Dollar Baby," and has played everyone from Man on Street ("The Pawnbroker," 1964) to president of the United States ("Deep Impact") to God ("Bruce Almighty").

■ MARION COTILLARD
(Miranda Tate)
She was Oscar's best actress of 2007 for inhabiting Edith Piaf in the French-made "La Vie en Rose," making her only the second actress to win for a non-English-language role (Sophia Loren was the first). Cotillard has since been fortifying a lot of American movies ("Public Enemies," "Inception," "Contagion") as well as films on her home turf, such as this year's Cannes entry "Rust & Bone."

■ GARY OLDMAN
(Commissioner Gordon)
One of the world's more respected performers, often cited as a favorite by his fellow actors, Oldman is best known by younger audiences as Sirius Black in the "Harry Potter" series, and by older fans as the star of "Sid and Nancy" and "State of Grace." He received a best actor Oscar nomination last year for "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy," a performance as understated as "The Dark Knight Rises" is outlandish.

■ LIAM NEESON
(Ra's al Ghul)
Just this year, Neeson had one of his bigger successes with the hit "The Grey" and has long been associated with noble characters-cum-reluctant heroes—as he was in "Unknown" as well as "Gangs of New York." Oscar-nominated for "Schindler's List," Neeson makes only a fleeting appearance in "The Dark Knight Returns," thus making the film seem even more like an embarrassment of riches.

With 'Idol' behind her, Lopez eyes more films

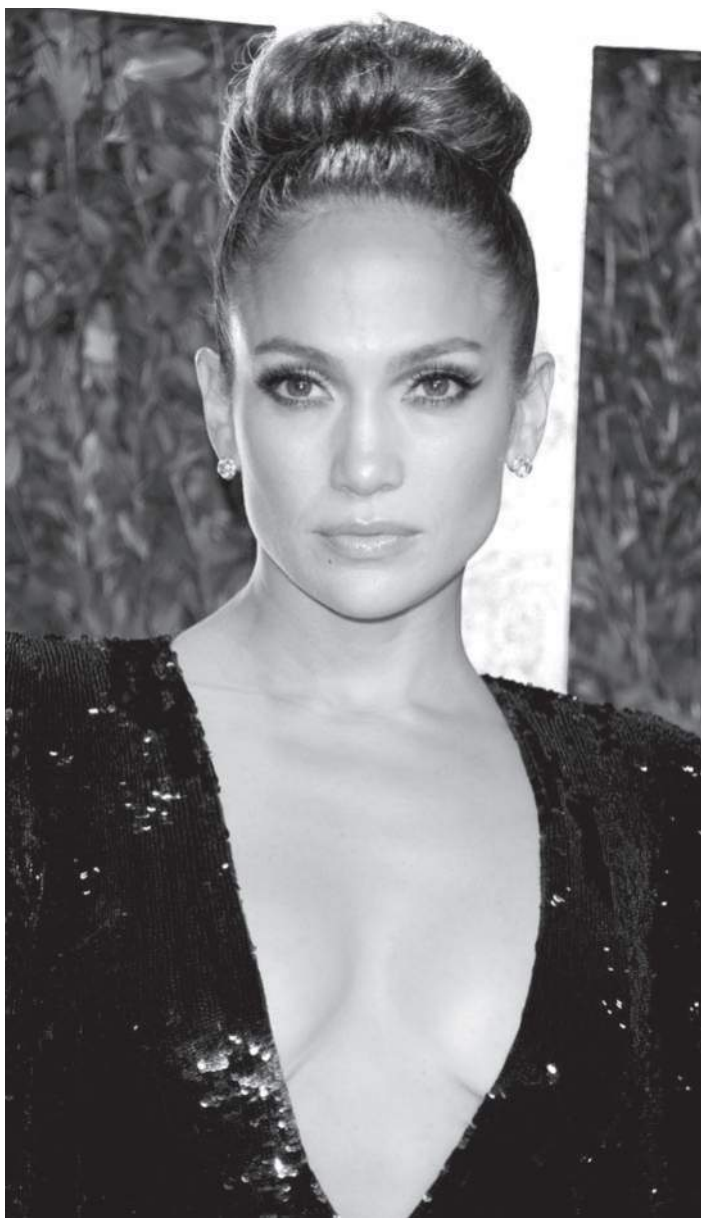
By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY
AP MUSIC WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Jennifer Lopez was part of the all-star cast that helped lead "Ice Age: Continental Drift" to the top of the box office over the weekend, and the entertainer is eager to focus even more attention on her once white-hot movie career.

"I do miss doing films. I feel like the last two years with '(American) Idol,' I've really, really focused on, you know, my music. ... It was all kind of very synergistic, it worked really well together," said Lopez, whose movie hits include "Maid in Manhattan" and "Selena," and who was in "What to Expect When You're Expecting" earlier this year. "But (film) is something that I really loved, it's how I kind of started in this business, and it doesn't leave you. I am an actress, I need to do that, too."

She'll certainly have more time now that she's not going to be a judge on "American Idol." She announced last Friday that she will not be coming back to the Fox talent competition, following in the footsteps of fellow judge Steven Tyler, who announced a day earlier that he would leave the show to devote more time to his band, Aerosmith.

But before Lopez concentrates more on film, she has a lot on her music plate. She's releasing an upcoming greatest hits album, and this summer, she embarked on a world tour with Enrique Iglesias.



AP

In this Feb. 26, 2012 file photo, actress and singer Jennifer Lopez arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar party in West Hollywood, Calif.

The 42-year-old singer-actress considers this her first world tour—she briefly performed several worldwide dates with then-husband Marc Anthony four years ago, but it wasn't as extensive as this new trek, which is currently in the United States.

Back then, she was pregnant with her twins, Max and Emme. Now they'll be on tour with her, and that represents another challenge for the superstar as she juggles performing with parenthood (she says her mother will join her for a time, and she has lots of help with her children, including other family members).

"From a personal standpoint, I just want it to be (an) enjoyable, healthy, exciting experience for us, something that we can look back on and say, 'Oh, we did this,'" she said. "I don't even know if they'll remember, they're only 4 (years old) right now, but I want it to be something that will be good for them."

Lopez will also be keeping an eye out to make sure her fans have a good time. She's launching what's billed as "Tour Feed" on jenniferlopez.com on Monday. It will give fans inside information on the tour like set lists and rehearsal footage, photos and more.

"I really have enjoyed kind of getting on Twitter and using Facebook and using the little VIP things, because I think that's what they really want as fans. They want to know what's going on with you, and what it's like to walk in every day, and those kind of things that nobody knows. I do think it's a great thing for them to have a part in it," she said, adding that fan interaction was one of main reasons why she's on the road this summer.

"It was one of the biggest questions I got asked over and over again," she said. "I was like you know what? I think I need to tour."

Fantasy sports widows: Don't get mad, get celeb-ed

NEW YORK (AP)—Widowed by hubby's fantasy sports obsession? Don't get mad, get Kim Kardashian. Or Tom Cruise. Or Kate Middleton.

Fantasy sports leagues are big business online, drawing more than 33 million fans of football to cricket. Now, celeb watchers have a handful of their own websites to draft "teams" and trash talk their friends.

They take on names like "The Lifestyles of the Vain and Narcissistic," "Pop Stars and Posers" and "Snookipocolypse." They hold boozy draft parties, sometimes play for token cash and have stats of their own to pore over.

Angelle Smith, a 31-year-old attorney in Washington, D.C., drafted a team in the "Celebrity Wonkettes" league at the urging of a friend. The league soon morphed into the "Celebrity Wonks & Wonkettes" when they coaxed a few guys to join.

"She said `Do you think other people care as much about following celebrities as we do?' I said `Absolutely,'" Smith recalled. "Within about 10 minutes we had a pretty solid group of people ready to play."

Their site of choice is CelebrityFantasyDraft.com, which offers a database of 2,500 celebs to choose from and sends out weekly point counts in email based on the number and placement of photos in three weekly magazines over a two-month season.

"It's mind candy," said Denise Riley, a Denver attorney who thought up the site. "You have so much stress in your daily life. It's just something to get your mind off of everything else that you have to do."

Similar celeb-scoring sites are mere aggregators, sucking in famous names from all over the interwebs.

Drool-inducing stats often drive fantasy sports fans. Not so much for some celeb players.

"If one of us had to be responsible for actually calculating that I don't think it would ever happen," said Lisa Lovett, 31, a college career services worker in Denver.

Among Lovett's current picks: Beyonce, Jay-Z, Justin Bieber, Prince Harry and Suri Cruise. Her team's running fourth, but the season isn't over until the end of July.

Each team owner in Lovett's league antes up $10. Winner takes all, or about $90 once the $20 fee to the site is paid.

In a different league but using the same site, Smith's team includes Bieber, Jason Segel (in a new movie, dating Michelle Williams), Kardashian ex Kris Humphries and Mason Disick, the first offspring of Kourtney Kardashian who just became a big brother—in season!

"The knowledge people display is amazing," Smith said of her fellow team owners. "People do their homework. No one wants to be last."

Drafting celebs is tricky on Riley's site. Celeb goes to rehab? Deduct 10 points. Arrests are minus 5 and mug shots minus two.

Engagement and pregnancy announcements, on the other hand, are worth an extra three points. Add five for marriage, birth and adoption news.

Riley bases play on People, Us Weekly and InTouch. Covers are the biggest scorers at 10 points. Disses mean deducted points—three off for losers in Us Weekly's Who Wore it Best section, for instance, and three off for losers of Style Showdown in InTouch.

Strategy is equal parts radar, research and luck.

"Whenever `The Bachelor' is on, if you can figure out who might be the pick, you're golden," Riley said. Same goes for "The Bachelorette."

TV's Teen Moms, Housewives and American Idols (aspiring or anointed) are usually everywhere, along with the entire Kardashian family. Awards season is awash in nominees, who are always a good bet, and movie promotional tours and premieres are key—hello Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart with three movies between them to hawk.

Brian Evans, an administrator for a veterinary practice, is in Smith's league of 14 teams, which play for a kitschy, zebra-stripe sash with photos of celebs glued on. He's a fantasy baseball fanatic who isn't quite as rabid when it comes to Hollywood.

Jennifer Anniston, who may or may not be engaged to Justin Theroux, was carrying his team heading into the season's end. He picked Daniel Radcliffe, among others, because he knew who he is.

Evans and the two other guys in the league aren't looking to win. They have a gentleman's bet for best of the boys: "It's a bottle of vodka. Really that's what I'm going for."

OBITUARIES

Deep Purple's Jon Lord dies at age 71

LONDON (AP)—British rocker Jon Lord, the keyboardist whose powerful, driving tones helped turn Deep Purple and Whitesnake into two of the most popular hard rock acts in a generation, died Monday. He was 71. A statement on Lord's official website says the Leicester, England-born musician suffered a fatal pulmonary embolism in London after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. "Jon passed from Darkness to Light," the statement said. Lord co-wrote some of Deep Purple's most famous tunes, including "Smoke on the Water," and later had a successful solo career following his retirement from the band in 2002.

Stephen Covey, '7 Habits' author, dies at 79

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Considered a pioneer in the self-help genre aimed at helping readers become more productive in their lives, author Stephen R. Covey had an enormous impact on both the corporate world and the personal lives of millions. The well-known motivational speaker and author of the best-selling "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," which sold more than 20 million copies in 38 languages, died Monday at a hospital in Idaho Falls, Idaho, due to complications from a bicycle accident in April, according to his family. "In his final hours, he was surrounded by his loving wife and each one of his children and their spouses, just as he always wanted," the family said in a statement. He was 79.

Andrew Stroud, ex-husband of Nina Simone, dies

NEW YORK (AP) — Andrew Stroud, a former New York City police detective who was singer Nina Simone's ex-husband and one-time manager, has died. He was 86. His niece Joyce Stroud said he died in his sleep on Saturday, in the Bronx. Stroud met Simone in early 1961. They married later that year, and had a daughter together. It was Simone's second marriage and Stroud's fourth. Stroud left the police force to manage Simone's career, and also wrote and produced some of her songs. The couple officially divorced in the early 1970s. Simone died in 2003 in France. Stroud is also survived by his fifth wife; two sons; 10 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

'I Love Lucy' director Bill Asher dies at 90

PALM DESERT, California (AP) — The director and producer behind the television classics "I Love Lucy" and "Bewitched" has died. Bill Asher was 90. His wife, Meredith, says he died Monday at a facility in Palm Desert, California, of complications from Alzheimer's disease. Asher was best known for his work on "I Love Lucy," where he directed Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz for 100 of the show's 181 episodes between 1952 and 1957. He also produced and directed "The Patty Duke Show" and "Bewitched," which starred his then-wife Elizabeth Montgomery. Montgomery and Asher had three children together.

Funk Brothers bass player Babbitt dies at 74

DETROIT (AP)—Prominent Motown studio musician and Funk Brothers member Bob Babbitt, whose bass playing pounded through the Temptations hit "Ball of Confusion" and Marvin Gaye's "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)," has died. He was 74. Babbitt died Monday of complications from brain cancer in Nashville, Tenn., where he had lived for many years, his manager David Spero said in a statement released by Universal Music, the label in which Babbitt contributed to numerous hit records. Well-known for decades among musicians, Babbitt laid down bass lines on Stevie Wonder's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered," along with "The Tears of a Clown" by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, "Inner City Blues" by Marvin Gaye, and Edwin Starr's "War."

1st female country superstar Kitty Wells dies

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Kitty Wells, country music's first female superstar, died peacefully at home Monday after complications from a stroke. She was 92. Dubbed "The Queen of Country Music" decades ago, Wells had been a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame since 1976 and could look back on a career that spanned more than six decades after her retirement. For who knew Wells, she was a powerful presence. A country superstar in her own right, Wells scored the first country No. 1 hit by a solo female artist with "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." She recorded approximately 50 albums, had 25 Top 10 country hits and went around the world several times. From 1953 to 1968, various polls listed Wells as the No. 1 female country singer.

Cheering crowd and arena camera get Obamas to kiss

WASHINGTON (AP)—There's nothing like a little booing to help the first couple overcome their shyness.

President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, were taking in Monday night's USA Basketball exhibition game when the Verizon Center's "Kiss Cam" turned its eye their way. Their image on the huge arena screen prompted the crowd to cheer - a not-so-subtle hint that Obama plant one on the first lady.

Both smiled, but Obama just put his arm around his wife as the game resumed. That cautious reaction brought some boos.

Obama got a do-over later in the game when the Kiss Cam swung back his way. This time he delivered, giving Mrs. Obama a big kiss on the lips. And a peck on the forehead for good measure.

And the crowd roared.

AP

President Barack Obama kisses the head of first lady Michelle Obama after kissing her for 'Kiss Cam' while attending the Olympic men's exhibition basketball game between Team USA and Brazil, Monday, July 16, 2012, in Washington.

Source: Mariah Carey in the mix for 'Idol'

NEW YORK (AP)—"American Idol" may be getting a worldwide idol as a judge—Mariah Carey.

A person familiar with the show's negotiations say Carey is being pursued to join the judging panel of the Fox talent competition. The source requested anonymity because of the private nature of negotiations, which were termed as serious. Carey has also been courted by other talent competitions, and her name has been thrown out in the past for "Idol" and other shows.

There are two openings: Both Jennifer Lopez and Steven Tyler announced last week that they were leaving as judges after two seasons. Randy Jackson, who is a manager, producer and friend of Carey's, is the only judge left. There are reports that Jackson's role may shift as well.

AP

This May 26, 2012 file photo shows U.S. Singer Mariah Carey performing on stage during a concert at the Mawazine Festival in Rabat, Morocco.

If Carey were to join, she'd bring considerable expertise on hitmaking: The Grammy-winner is one of the best-selling artists of all time, with numerous No. 1 hits. She's currently working on a new album, her first since her twins were born last year.

It would also give the show a heavy dose of superstardom, which is key considering the star power on shows like "X Factor," which added Britney Spears and Demi Lovato as judges and will begin its second season in the fall.

"American Idol" has been TV's most popular program for nearly a decade, but has had a marked downturn in its audience. Once a ratings juggernaut, its last finale drew its lowest ratings in its 11-season history.

'Today' and new co-host fall to 'GMA' in Week 1

NEW YORK (AP)—A majority of morning viewers has greeted the arrival of Savannah Guthrie with a yawn in her first week as "Today" show co-anchor.

NBC's "Today" was beaten last week by ABC archrival "Good Morning America" by 357,000 viewers, the Nielson Co. said.

"GMA" drew an average of 4.57 million viewers, compared with 4.21 million for "Today," according to preliminary Nielsen figures released Monday.

This represents the largest lead by "GMA" over "Today" in more than 17 years, while extending its top-ranked status to three consecutive weeks, ABC said.

Meanwhile, in the 25-to-54 demographic, "GMA" landed just 2,000 viewers behind "Today." It was the narrowest margin in that demo in nearly 17 years, the network said.

Final Nielsen numbers will be released later this week.

"Today" had been the undisputed morning champ in the ratings since 1995 until this spring, when a resurgent "GMA" snapped NBC's winning streak by seizing the top spot several times.

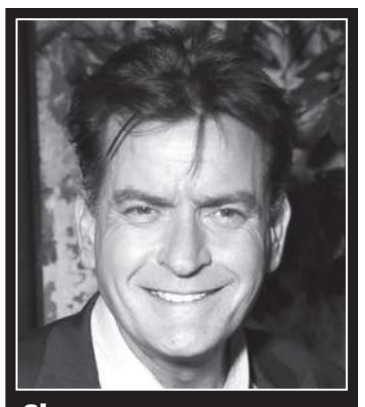
Charlie Sheen gives $1M to troops, USO

NEW YORK (AP)—Charlie Sheen's anger issues will soon be helping soldiers.

The actor announced Monday that he'll donate at least $1 million to the USO in what is among the largest single donations ever given to the troop morale-boosting organization.

Sheen says he'll donate 1 percent of profits from his new FX show "Anger Management" to the group, known for sending entertainers to lighten the hearts of troops. He'll give a minimum of $1 million with no cap on the final amount.

Sheen's donation will be used as part of an ongoing campaign to help injured troops. Says the comedian: "It's an honor for me to be able to give back to these men and women of the military who have done so much for all of us."



Sheen

Monaco prince sues over NYC nightclub fracas

NEW YORK (AP)—A son of Monaco's Princess Caroline is suing over a New York nightclub brawl that left him bloodied, spurred another patron's arrest and has both camps claiming the other started it.

Prince Pierre Casiraghi and two friends are taking on the Double Seven club, patron Adam Hock and Hock's attorney in the lawsuit, made public Monday.

Casiraghi says Hock drunkenly attacked him and his cohorts after the club owner invited Hock to sit with them at a VIP table in February. One of the prince's lawyers, Edward Kratt, has said his client's group didn't provoke the melee.

Casiraghi was treated for facial cuts. Hock has pleaded not guilty to assault.

The prince's lawsuit says the club shouldn't have served alcohol to Hock and should have known Hock is "a person of pugilistic propensity."

The lawsuit also says Hock and defense lawyer Joseph Tacopina defamed the prince and his cohorts by saying they started the February fracas and have a history of belligerence.

Tacopina said his remarks were made to defend a falsely accused client. "If they don't like the truth, that's their problem," Tacopina said Monday.

A lawyer for Double Seven owner Jeffrey Jah said he "unequivocally disputes" the allegations against him in the lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages.

Jah "intends to vigorously defend against them and is confident that he will ultimately prevail," said the lawyer, Terrence A. Oved.

Casiraghi is the youngest of Princess Caroline's four children. His father, Italian businessman Stefano Casiraghi, was Caroline's second husband and was killed in a boating accident in 1990.

Caroline is a sister of Monaco's ruling sovereign, Prince Albert II.

Hock used to be an owner of the Hawaiian Tropic Zone, a nightspot in Times Square.

Talking to kids about sex is an ongoing conversation

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: How do you tell a young girl about sex, and what's the best way to go about telling her? My niece is 12 and hasn't had her first period yet. But she has a serious crush on an older boy, and kids grow up real fast in our neighborhood. You'd be shocked if you knew how young they are when they start fooling around.

This is a difficult subject to discuss, but I know that our talk will have to happen pretty soon. She is closer to me than to her mom. When I was growing up, the word "sex" wasn't mentioned, and one of my cousins got pregnant in her sophomore year of high school. I don't want that same mistake made again. Please help.

I heard you have a book about this. How can I get one?

ALMOST READY IN LOUISIANA

DEAR ALMOST READY: Kids grow up fast all over these days —not just in your neighborhood. "The talk" with your niece should have started long ago as part of an ongoing discussion because young people are maturing earlier than they did years ago, for a variety of reasons.

Because it hasn't already started happening, your niece should be told that there will be changes in her body and that they are normal. She should also be assured they are nothing to fear. You heard correctly that I publish a booklet about what teens should know about sex (and drugs) that covers a variety of important topics. Adults and parents sometimes find the subject difficult to discuss. My booklet was written to help "break the ice" and begin the discussion more easily. It can be ordered by sending your name and address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL, 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price. It could be very helpful to you if you review it before starting the discussion with your niece so you can prepare beforehand to answer her questions or guide the conversations.

Important topics that are included are "How old must a girl be before she can get pregnant?" "How old must a boy be before he can father a child?" "What time of the month is a girl 100 percent safe?" and "Can a girl get pregnant the first time she has sex?" In addition, there is a section on various sexually transmitted diseases and what to do if you think you may have one. It is extremely important that they be treated right away, because not doing so can have lifelong consequences.

Knowledge is power, and the more information your niece has, the better she can be prepared for making the decisions that lie ahead of her. But most of all your niece needs to know that becoming a woman is a cause for celebration—and I hope you will present that to her and make it clear.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have a lighted doorbell at my front door. But nine out of 10 people who come here still knock rather than use the bell. Sometimes I don't hear them, so then they'll start pounding with a lot of force until they can get my attention. They never resort to using the doorbell. Why are people so stubborn?

AT HOME IN MELBOURNE, FLA.

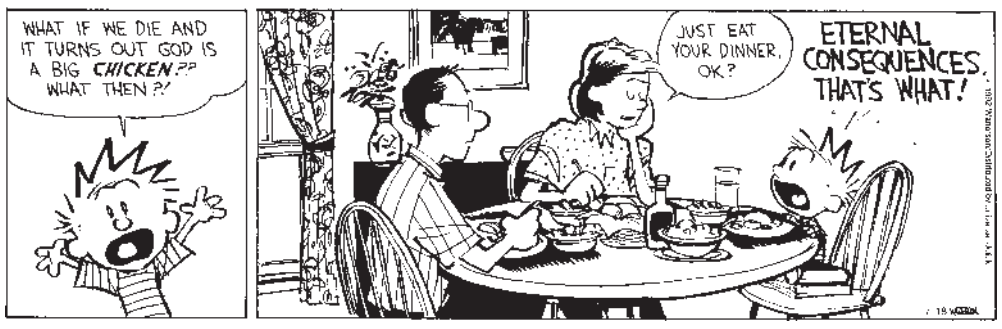
DEAR AT HOME: I'm not sure it's stubbornness. They simply might not think to use it. However, I may have a solution for you. Post a sign over your doorbell that reads: PLEASE RING BELL!

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

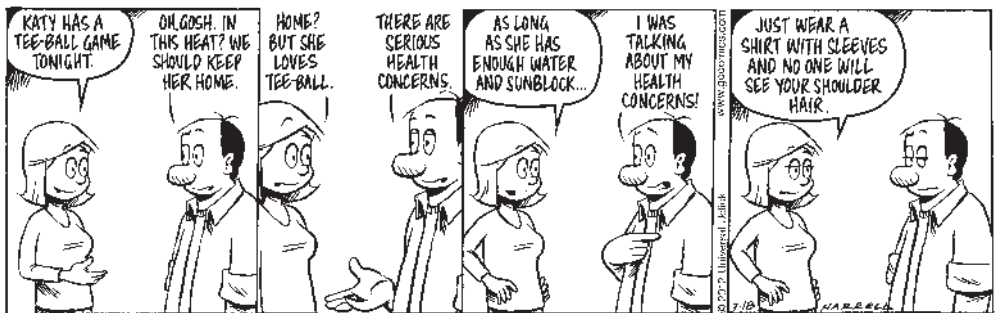


Garfield®

By Jim Davis

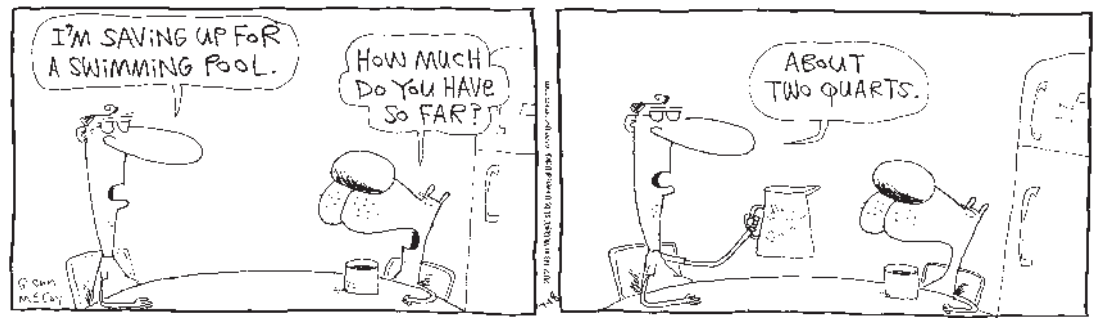
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


KATY HAS A TEE-BALL GAME TONIGHT.
OH, GOSH. IN THIS HEAT? WE SHOULD KEEP HER HOME.
HOME? BUT SHE LOVES TEE-BALL.
THERE ARE SERIOUS HEALTH CONCERNS.
AS LONG AS SHE HAS ENOUGH WATER AND SUNBLOCK...
I WAS TALKING ABOUT MY HEALTH CONCERNS!
JUST WEAR A SHIRT WITH SLEEVES AND NO ONE WILL SEE YOUR SHOULDER HAIR.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Throws in
5 Tatter
8 Wound cover
12 Tide type
13 Compass dir.
14 Corn concoction
15 Severe decline
17 Dermatologist's case
18 As found
19 Singer Sophie
21 Youngster
22 36-Across segment
23 Blue
26 "Charlotte's —"
28 Make into law
31 Old portico
33 Homer's interjection
35 Arizona river
36 Variety show
38 Talk on and on
40 Back talk
41 Advantage
43 Sweet potato's kin
45 Sunscreen, usually
47 Complained bitterly
51 Bedouin
52 Sports fans' party venue?
54 Astronaut Armstrong
55 Conclude
56 Sharpen
57 Mete (out)
58 Deli loaf
59 Despot

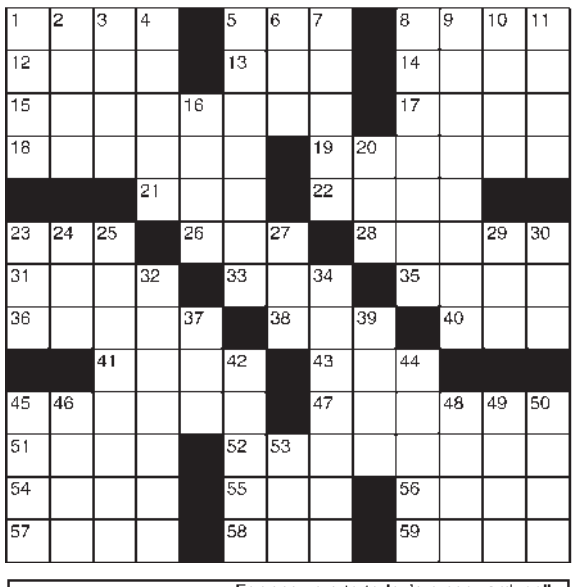
DOWN

1 Opposed
2 Campus bigwig
3 Raised platform
4 Divided
5 Considered
6 Blackbird
7 Fellows
8 What "thisclue" needs
9 Mixed drink
10 Boleyn or Bancroft
11 "Cheers" serving
16 Pack away
20 Guitar's cousin
23 Georgia's ex-status (Abbr.)
24 Chowed down
25 Overlap
27 Marsh
29 Roman 151
30 Spigot
32 Within earshot
34 Outing on a wagon
37 Id counterpart
39 False god
42 Go in
44 Possibly will
45 Crow's-nest cry
46 Sandwich treat
48 Neighbor of Cambodia
49 Sicilian spouter
50 Antelope's playmate
53 Whatever amount

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	H	I	C	■	P	A	M	■	O	T	I	S
M	Y	N	A	■	O	U	R	■	D	O	S	E
O	D	D	B	A	L	L	S	■	D	O	I	F
N	E	O	■	C	A	D	■	A	F	T	E	R
■	■	■	E	R	R	■	P	I	E	■	■	■
O	L	I	V	E	■	F	A	L	L	O	U	T
P	A	R	E	■	S	I	X	■	L	A	S	H
S	P	E	N	C	E	R	■	T	O	K	A	Y
■	■	■	M	A	X	■	S	A	W	■	■	■
B	A	C	O	N	■	A	I	R	■	K	O	N
A	X	O	N	■	E	V	E	N	I	D	U	E
L	I	M	E	■	D	O	G	■	S	T	O	W
E	S	P	Y	■	O	W	E	■	P	E	R	I

Yesterday's answer 7-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18– only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chace Crawford, 27; Kristin Bell, 32; Vin Diesel, 45; Wendy Williams, 48.

Happy Birthday: You mustn't share your secrets or get involved with people who have something to hide. Step outside your comfort zone if it will help you get to the bottom of a situation that needs to be resolved in order for you to advance. Don't put up with anyone using you for ulterior motives. Your numbers are 3, 14, 17, 26, 35, 44, 48.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Keep things simple and be gracious at all times, and you will avoid complaints and make a positive display for those viewing you critically. Accepting that change is required will show versatility and demonstrate that you are a team player. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): It's the detail and precision you incorporate into everything you do that will make the biggest impact and bring about an opportunity to get involved in something that interests you. Take a leadership position and forge ahead. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Connect with people and groups that share your goals. Getting a variety of input will help you work productively toward the completion of a project you are passionate about. Enhance your love life by pursuing what you want. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): There is plenty to consider, and questions must be asked. Nothing is as bad as you think, and once you gather all of the facts, you'll know exactly how to proceed. Insecurity or emotional instability will hold you back. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Consider a different approach when dealing with people professionally and personally. Withholding information will leave you in a precarious position. Volunteering your services will open up options that can help you counteract a difficult situation. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Keep an open mind, but don't give in to something that isn't to your advantage. Move forward alone if it seems to be a better or more lucrative choice. Don't let an emotional relationship cause you to make a poor decision. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Follow your heart and share your thoughts, concerns and intentions, and you will find out quickly who is in your corner and who isn't. A love relationship will flourish if you plan a romantic evening. Self-improvement projects will pay high returns. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't put up with demanding individuals. Ask for what you want and deserve. Collect old debts or cut ties with those taking advantage of your skills or services. Focus on home, family and reducing stress and overhead. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Give-and-take will lead to good results. Make alterations to the way you live or do things and you will please someone you are trying to impress. Your appeal and a take-charge attitude will help you achieve the results you want. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Hide your frustration from anyone who may use it against you. Responsibilities are best dealt with quickly so you can move on to the topics, projects or people you'd rather pursue. Don't let an emotional matter fester or hold you back. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): A financial situation will influence your life. Offer a service that has the potential to help pay the bills. Love will improve your life and help you feel more at ease regarding your future. A career change looks positive. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You need time to think, reorganize and gain confidence. Time spent with someone who inspires you will move you in the right direction. Don't let someone's jealousy or disinterest slow your productivity. Put off dealing with an authority figure. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, intelligent and quick-witted. You are proactive and multitalented.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		3	4	1	5	2		
	4						9	
7				3				4
4				7				8
8	1			4	3	5		2
3								1
5								6
	2			6			1	
		8	7	5	2	3		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	9	6	5	2	7	8	3	1
7	1	5	3	8	6	4	9	2
2	8	3	1	4	9	6	5	7
9	6	4	7	1	8	3	2	5
3	5	2	9	6	4	1	7	8
1	7	8	2	3	5	9	4	6
6	2	9	8	7	3	5	1	4
8	3	1	4	5	2	7	6	9
5	4	7	6	9	1	2	8	3

Difficulty Level ★★ 7/17

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

KAZAKHSTAN'S MODERN CAPITAL. Solution: 10 letters

T	N	I	R	P	M	I	F	U	P	A	L	A	C	E
E	O	N	A	K	A	L	A	A	L	A	L	A	T	E
E	S	W	A	N	S	T	R	O	N	M	R	H	R	X
S	I	I	E	P	Y	K	M	G	A	T	O	E	T	O
O	T	S	L	R	S	K	U	T	S	S	H	I	U	T
I	R	R	A	I	A	A	Y	R	M	P	T	E	L	I
D	E	U	S	D	G	D	F	U	S	N	I	F	M	C
N	L	O	E	E	K	O	I	Y	E	E	S	I	Ⓦ	E
A	A	T	E	U	U	N	L	M	O	U	N	L	Ⓔ	C
R	N	Q	R	N	I	A	U	D	A	D	Q	I	Ⓘ	O
G	D	M	T	H	N	N	L	R	E	R	O	S	Ⓥ	N
T	A	A	P	A	O	I	E	C	I	N	Y	R	O	O
S	I	L	T	M	U	A	P	E	A	C	E	P	I	M
N	E	S	F	B	A	Y	T	E	R	E	K	G	C	I
D	A	K	R	A	Y	R	A	S	D	N	A	H	G	C

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Akmola, Alakan, Almaty, Anthem, Aqtau, Area, Arts, Astana, Atyrau, Bayterek, Build, Delphiniums, Economic, Ertis, Esil, Ethos, Exotic, Flag, Fountain, Fyodor, Golden Egg, Grandiose, Hands, Imprint, Land, Language, Life, Monument, Mosque, Nice, Oil, Palace, Parks, Peace, Pride, Pyramid, Samruk, Saryarka, Sphere, Swans, Tours, Tower, Trees, View, Vines

Yesterday's Answer: Ceremony

The NEW Treasury (can be ordered by sending a check or money order for $15.95 plus $3.00 postage and handling ($4.95 total U.S. funds only) for the first book, $7.00 plus $3.00 postage and handling for each additional book to Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106 or call toll-free 1-800-642-2482. Please allow at least 4 weeks for delivery. Limited supply of the first 20 books printed.)

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Jeanette Vergara Manicdao
c/o Maricar M. Guintu
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Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: 288-6274; 235-3128
Facsimile: 233-4716

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT of the COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of Guardianship For:	)	FCD GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 12-0290
ONEIL MIGUEL MANICDAO MAGNO, A Minor Child	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
By:	)	
JEANETTE VERGARA MANICDAO Petitioner(s)	)	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on August 2, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. in Courtroom 205A, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 29,th day of June, 2012.

Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. $600/mo. Call 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

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Church seeks 2 Christian Children's Church Instructors for Sunday Service. Call 888.2116 for more information.

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Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Close to NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Pls. visit our website www.saipan-properties.com. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

JVA No. 12-028
Opening Date: Monday, July 16, 2012
Closing Date: Monday, July 30, 2012

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Red Sox defeat Youkilis, White Sox

BOSTON (AP)—Adrian Gonzalez spoiled Kevin Youkilis' return to Fenway Park, hitting a tiebreaking, three-run homer in the eighth inning to lift the Boston Red Sox to a 5-1 win over the Chicago White Sox on Monday.

Boston traded Youkilis on June 24, sending the three-time All-Star and cash to Chicago for utilityman Brent Lillibridge and a minor league pitcher. Youkilis went 3 for 4 with two doubles in his first game back at his longtime home.

Carl Crawford returned to Boston's lineup after missing the first 89 games this season with left elbow and wrist injuries, going 1 for 3 with a walk.

Crawford and David Ortiz opened the eighth with consecutive walks against Leyson Septimo (0-1). Gonzalez then hit a drive into the seats above the Green Monster for his seventh homer of the season.

Boston Red Sox third baseman Will Middlebrooks (64) stretches but cannot reach the ball during a pick-off attempt on a throwing error by Adrian Gonzalez, which allowed Chicago White Sox's Kevin Youkilis to score, during the first inning of a baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston, Monday, July 16, 2012. AP

Yankees 6, Blue Jays 3

In New York, Raul Ibanez hit a tiebreaking grand slam with two outs in the eighth inning as New York beat Toronto after Blue Jays slugger Jose Bautista left the game with a wrist injury.

Ibanez connected on a 3-1 pitch from Jason Frasor for a no-doubt drive into the first row of the second deck in right field to snap a 2-all tie.

Bautista injured his left wrist on a swing in the eighth and was removed from the game.

Tigers 8, Angels 6

In Detroit, Brennan Boesch hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the seventh inning as Detroit rallied to beat Los Angeles.

The Angels led 5-2 after a four-run fifth, but the Tigers chipped away, scoring two runs in the bottom of that inning and three more in the seventh. Delmon Young tied it with a sacrifice fly and Boesch followed with a homer off reliever LaTroy Hawkins (2-2) to make it 7-5.

Indians 3, Rays 2

In St. Petersburg, Florida, Zach McAllister shrugged off being struck in his pitching arm by a line drive to finish six solid innings as Cleveland held on to beat Tampa Bay.

McAllister (4-1) appeared to get hit above the right elbow by Jeff Keppinger's RBI single in the fourth. He retired the next six batters and eight of his last nine overall.

Choo Shin-soo ended up with an RBI double in the third for Cleveland after he had what initially was ruled a home run overturned by instant replay in the first.

Mariners 9, Royals 4

In Kansas City, Missouri, Casper Wells homered and drove in a career-high five runs, all of them against Jonathan Sanchez, as Seattle downed Kansas City.

Justin Smoak also had a two-run homer off Sanchez (1-6), pulled after allowing a season-high seven runs in a season-low 1 1-3 innings. The lefthander who once threw a no-hitter for San Francisco gave up seven hits and a walk before he was yanked to a chorus of boos.

Jason Vargas (9-7) took advantage of the rare output from one of the American League's worst offenses.

Twins 19, Orioles 7

In Minneapolis, Denard Span had three hits and five RBIs, plus two spectacular catches in center field to help Minnesota stop its five-game losing streak with a victory over Baltimore.

Ben Revere made two remarkable running grabs himself in right field to go with four hits and three RBIs. Joe Mauer homered and drove in two runs, and Justin Morneau had four of Minnesota's 20 hits.

Astros 2, Padres 2

In San Diego, J.A. Happ and three relievers combined on a five-hitter, Scott Moore drove in two runs and the Houston Astros beat the San Diego Padres 2-0 Monday night to snap a 13-game road losing streak.

Jose Altuve doubled and scored twice to help Houston end its longest skid away from home since dropping 14 straight in 1997.

Happ (7-9) allowed a double in the first to Alexi Amarista but retired his next 12 batters. The left-hander gave up four hits over 6 1-3 innings while striking out four and walking one.

Diamondbacks 5, Reds 3

In Cincinnati, Miguel Montero drove in four runs with a bases-loaded double and a solo homer Monday to lead the Arizona Diamondbacks to a 5-3 win shortly after the Cincinnati Reds learned they'll have to try to hold onto first place in the National League Central without Joey Votto.

An MRI scan found the All-Star first baseman has torn cartilage in his left knee that will require surgery and sideline him for three to four weeks.

The slumping Diamondbacks scored four runs in the first off Bronson Arroyo (4-6), who lasted a season-low three innings.

Marlins 5, Nationals 3

In Miami, Hanley Ramirez hit a two-run homer, Carlos Lee drove in two runs, as Miami beat Washington to earn a split in the four-game series.

Carlos Zambrano (5-7) allowed three runs and eight hits in six innings to pick up his first win since June 3.

Heath Bell pitched a scoreless eighth, and Mike Dunn pitched the ninth to record his first career save. Dunn allowed a two-out single to Bryce Harper and walked Ryan Zimmerman before striking out Adam LaRoche to end the game.

Phillies 3, Dodgers 2

In Los Angeles, Ryan Howard homered for his first RBI of the season and Joe Blanton pitched eight effective innings to lead the Philadelphia Phillies over the Los Angeles Dodgers 3-2 on Monday night.

Jimmy Rollins also went deep and Jonathan Papelbon retired pinch-hitter Adam Kennedy on an easy popup with a runner at third to end it.

Howard missed Philadelphia's first 84 games because of the ruptured left Achilles tendon he sustained while grounding out to end last year's NL division series against St. Louis.

Cardinals 3, Brewers 2

In Milwaukee, in what is shaping up as a rough season for John Axford, this might have been the worst moment yet.

And it might end up costing Axford his job as Milwaukee's closer.

Allen Craig hit a bloop RBI single off Axford to put St. Louis in front, and the Cardinals rallied to beat the Brewers 3-2 on Monday night.

Rockies 5, Pirates 4

In Denver, Dexter Fowler hit a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the ninth inning and the Colorado Rockies overcame a tying, three-run homer by Pedro Alvarez to beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 5-4 on a rain-soaked Monday night.

Wilin Rosario had two hits and scored the winning run for the Rockies.

Neil Walker had three hits and Andrew McCutchen added two for the Pirates, who have lost three of four.

For Knicks, match Lin or risk regret if he goes

NEW YORK (AP)—This would have been such an obvious decision in February.

Jeremy Lin was Kobe Bryant's equal on the court and at the souvenir stand during a mesmerizing stretch that Commissioner David Stern said he had "never quite seen anything like."

No way the New York Knicks were letting Lin get away back then, when he was the biggest thing in basketball.

Things are different now.

Lin no longer plays for a coach whose offense seems designed for him. He's coming off knee surgery and would come at a monstrous cost - thanks to an offer sheet from the Houston Rockets he signed - even for one of the league's richest teams.

So what once would have been an easy answer now creates so many questions.

Do the Knicks want Lin back?

Does Lin want to come back?

When will it be resolved?

The last one should be easiest, but this being the Knicks, isn't exactly. Teams have three days to match an offer sheet for their restricted free agents, so the Rockets believe the clock expires at 11:59 EDT on Tuesday night.

Except the Knicks have never confirmed if they received the offer sheet from the Rockets on Saturday, so it's possible they have a different deadline in mind, which could even lead to some kind of dispute or protest.

The contract is for three years and about $25 million, an enormous figure for someone who has made 25 starts. After paying Lin about $5 million per year the first two seasons, it balloons to nearly $15 million in the final year but would cost the Knicks more than twice that in luxury tax payments under the harsher penalties in the new collective bargaining agreement.

The terms of the original offer Lin had agreed to were four years and about $28 million, creating speculation that he went back to the Rockets and asked for something that would be tougher for the Knicks to match.

A number of fans want them to do it anyway, more than 5,000 signing an online petition at Change.org asking the Knicks to keep him. Team officials, who repeatedly said they intended to keep Lin before he signed the offer, won't comment on their plans now.

"I hope we get it done, man. I hope we can get it done," Knicks forward Carmelo Anthony said. "I would love to see him back, honestly, I would definitely love to see him back. But knowing the business of basketball, it's kind of a tough situation, kind of for both parties. With Jeremy, I know he definitely would want to be back in New York, and with the team, (owner James) Dolan definitely wants him back. But it's just a matter of figuring it out."

Anthony had called the Rockets' offer a "ridiculous contract" on Sunday and said he wasn't surprised by the backlash that followed.

"It was ridiculous for them to do what they did, as far as throwing that out there and making it tough on us to sign him back," Anthony said.

Maybe the Knicks could have avoided this by making Lin an offer right away. Instead they let him find one elsewhere first, which is what many teams do with restricted free agents.

Given his popularity in New York and all the opportunities that affords, it's difficult to imagine he'd want to sabotage his chances of returning. Yet maybe he doesn't see the same potential for himself under Mike Woodson as he showed in Mike D'Antoni's pick-and-roll offense. Or perhaps he's one of the many who sees the futility of the Anthony-Amare Stoudemire pairing and doesn't want the burden of being the point guard charged with making it work.

And maybe the Knicks don't believe he is, anyway. They made a veteran point guard a top priority in free agency, missing out on Steve Nash but signing Jason Kidd. Then they agreed to a sign-and-trade with Portland to bring back Raymond Felton to New York in a deal that was completed Monday.

None brings the marketing potential of Lin, whose story of undrafted Harvard graduate to unexpected NBA star was a hit around the world. (How many other players went into free agency with "Time" magazine list of top 100 most influential people on their resume?)

That gives Houston plenty of reason to want him back. The NBA's first American-born player of Chinese or Taiwanese decent would continue to grow the popularity the Rockets already enjoy in Asia thanks to their retired star, Yao Ming.

The Rockets had Lin on their roster during the preseason before waiving him, with two point guards ahead of him on the depth chart and an open roster spot needed to add a big man.

It wasn't long before they wished they'd done differently, general manager Daryl Morey writing on Twitter during Lin's dazzling stretch, when he averaged 24.6 points and 9.2 assists in 10 games from Feb. 4-20, that cutting Lin was a mistake.

Now it's up to the Knicks. Keep Linsanity where it was born or risk the same regret.

LeBron helps US win after bad start

WASHINGTON (AP)—Tough start for the Americans. The Olympic basketball team couldn't get a stop, the president couldn't get a kiss.

Eventually, things worked out for both of them.

LeBron James scored 30 points and the U.S. rallied from an early 10-point deficit to beat Brazil 80-69 on Monday night in its final exhibition game on home soil.

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden watched the Americans get off to a dismal start, then turn it around by holding the Brazilians to two baskets in the second quarter.

"They came out really counter-punching and taking advantage of our aggressiveness on defense, and they're well-coached. They came in with a great plan and executed their plan very well start of the game," U.S. guard Kobe Bryant said. "We made our adjustments second quarter, kept them to five points, which after the 20-something point first quarter is pretty impressive."

James helped the U.S. pull away in the final four minutes after they led by only seven with 4 1/2 minutes left, getting his final point on a free throw with 31 seconds left as Obama departed.

James, who scored 14 points in the final period, said it was "humbling" and "overwhelming" to play in front of the president.

"You have dreams about being in the NBA. You have dreams about making the game-winning shot at the buzzer. You never have dreams about having the president actually watching you play, because you don't think it's possible," he said. "It's definitely humbling, to see him here, the first lady and their kids here to watch us play. Really, it's amazing."

Kevin Durant, a D.C .native, added 11 and Chris Paul scored 10 for the Americans, who will leave Tuesday for Europe to complete their Olympic preparations. They face Britain in Manchester, England on Thursday before traveling to Barcelona to play Argentina and Spain.

It's a solid exhibition schedule, and this game showed the Americans have some work to do before they get to London. They were just 1 of 12 from 3-point range in the first half and struggled offensively when forced to play in the halfcourt.

"It felt good, though, to compete and stuff like that," Paul said. "Like we said, our defense is what's going to win games for us and obviously we imposed that after the first quarter."

The president met with the men's and women's teams, who swept the doubleheader from Brazil. He received a loud cheer when he arrived but like the U.S. players got off to a slow start. He needed a second chance in the fourth quarter before first lady Michelle Obama would grant him a kiss on the "Kiss Cam" segment, the crowd booing when she wouldn't allow him a smooch in the second quarter.

"You know, PDA is not for everybody, you know what I mean?" Bryant said. "But he makes the important decisions, so it's all good."

Players were just walking onto the floor for the jump ball when Obama and Biden emerged from the tunnel to take their seats. The start was delayed while they greeted fans, and perhaps the break had the U.S. players out of rhythm at the beginning of the game.

James hit two free throws to open the scoring, but the Americans didn't make their first basket until more than 2 1/2 minutes in after falling behind 7-2. Alex Garcia had two 3-pointers and two other baskets in the early going as Brazil pushed the lead to 17-7 barely five minutes into the game.

Indicative of the way things were going for the Americans, Russell Westbrook came up with a steal near midcourt and was all alone for a layup that he somehow botched. The Brazilians scored the final four points of the period, taking a 27-17 lead on Anderson Varejao's jumper with 15.5 seconds left.

Brazil coach Ruben Magnano said through an interpreter the goal was "not to focus on the names on the jersey and play the game, and they did it for almost 40 minutes ... head to head against the USA.

"It was a very important challenge to make the team ready for the Olympics," he added.

But the Americans got the tempo they wanted in the second, simply wrestling the ball out of Brazilian hands to create turnovers and fast breaks. A 12-0 run fueled by steals and layups turned an eight-point deficit into a 33-29 lead, and James powered to the basket for the last two baskets of the half as the Americans went into the break with a 37-32 lead.

The Americans expected and got a much tougher game than their exhibition opener, a 113-59 rout of the Dominican Republic last Thursday in Las Vegas. Brazil has loads of NBA size to exploit the Americans' biggest weakness, with Nene of the Washington Wizards, Varejao of the Cleveland Cavaliers and Tiago Splitter of San Antonio, plus experienced guard play.

Garcia scored 14 points to lead Brazil and Varejao finished with 12 points and 13 rebounds. Marcelo Huertas had 11 points and 13 assists.

Brazil gave the U.S. its toughest game at the world basketball championship two years ago, the Americans pulling out a 70-68 victory when Leandro Barbosa's shot from the lane bounced off the rim as time expired.

Of course, that U.S. team didn't have James or anyone else from the team that won the 2008 Olympic gold medal and are the favorites to repeat. The Americans believe they have a better squad than four years ago and maybe even could have beaten the Dream Team, but perhaps it's time to end that debate.

The Dream Team never found itself in a six-point game with six minutes to go, as the Americans did after Varejao tipped in a miss. The U.S. finally pulled away in the final 4 minutes, started by consecutive baskets by James, a 3-pointer and a bucket in the lane

"I think we just had a slow start, missing shots, some shots that we make every single day in practice," center Tyson Chandler said. "But the good thing about tonight is they showed us some looks that we haven't seen so far and we're learning defensively from it, and we'll make shots."

AP

Team USA forward LeBron James works to get past Brazil guard Alex Ribeiro Garcia during the first half of an Olympic exhibition basketball game Monday, July 16, 2012, in Washington. USA won, 80-69.

Ravens' Rice, Bears' Forte get long-term deals

NEW TORK (AP)--Ray Rice and Matt Forte got what they wanted Monday: long-term contracts that sometimes elude NFL running backs.

Neither Rice nor Forte was enamored of playing under the franchise tag tender in 2012, and negotiations went down to the wire. Then Rice scored big with the Baltimore Ravens, getting $40 million for five years, while Forte took a four-year, $32 million deal with the Chicago Bears.

Also getting a longer contract just before the deadline was Jacksonville placekicker Josh Scobee, who will stay with the Jaguars for four years and $13.8 million.

Rice led the NFL with 2,068 yards from scrimmage in making his second Pro Bowl. He helped the Ravens to their second AFC title game in his four pro seasons.

"Ray has been an integral part of us earning the playoffs in each of his four seasons," Ravens general manager Ozzie Newsome said. "His production on the field speaks for itself, and his leadership in the locker room is outstanding."

Although his numbers aren't quite at Rice's level, Forte is just as significant a contributor in Chicago's offense. Had he stayed healthy in 2011, he might have matched Rice, too.

Forte made the Pro Bowl for the first time, finishing with 1,487 yards from scrimmage, 997 rushing. He missed the final four games after spraining his right knee in a loss to Kansas City. The Bears lost all but one of those games, falling out of playoff contention.

Each of them would have played for the $7.74 million franchise tag - the average of the five highest-paid players at running back - had they not gotten the new contracts.

"I'm proud to be a Chicago Bear and excited to be here for another four years," Forte said in a statement released by the Bears. "I've been working hard this offseason and am looking forward to joining my teammates at training camp next week. I'm glad the business part is done and we can all turn our attention to football and our goal of winning a championship."

Scobee's tender would have been worth $2.88 million for 2012. His new deal is worth $3.45 million annually, with $4.75 million guaranteed. There are $400,000 worth of incentives Scobee could reach.

Oakland's Sebastian Janikowski ($4 million annually) and Phil Dawson ($3.81 million) are the only kickers scheduled to make more than Scobee in 2012. His new deal tops recent ones signed by Tampa Bay's Connor Barth ($3.3 million) and Denver's Matt Prater ($3.25 million), who both were franchised.

Players who are stuck with their one-year tenders are Lions defensive end Cliff Avril, $10.6 million tender; Falcons cornerback Brent Grimes, $10.2 million; Patriots wide receiver Wes Welker and Chiefs receiver Dwayne Bowe, $9.5 million; Cowboys linebacker Anthony Spencer, $8.8 million; 49ers safety Dashon Goldson, $6.2 million; Redskins tight end Fred Davis, $5.446 million; Browns placekicker Phil Dawson, $3.8 million; and Bengals PK Mike Nugent, one year, $2.6 million.

None of them will be a pauper in 2012.

Altogether, 12 players landed long-term contracts, led by the Saints giving quarterback Drew Brees the richest annual deal in NFL history. The 2011 Offensive Player of the Year signed a five-year, $100 million agreement; only Buffalo DE Mario Williams has gotten that much money, and his deal is for six years.

Arizona DE Calais Campbell received the next most lucrative deal (five years, $55 million), followed by Eagles wideout DeSean Jackson (five years, $51 million). Colts defensive end Robert Mathis got a four-year, $36 million deal, with Titans safety Michael Griffin getting the same amount over five years. Raiders safety Tyvon Branch was next at four years, $26 million.

Then came Scobee, Barth, Prater and Giants punter Steve Weatherford (five years, $12.75 million).

Rotary youth caging eyes mid-August opening

Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands is aiming to kick off the 21st Annual Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League mid next month at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

BANMI is bringing back two age group divisions in the league—the U19 and U15—and is also hoping to have a separate competition for the U10 age group. Games are tentatively scheduled every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for U19 and Saturday morning for U15 and U10.

Other details of the league will be discussed in a meeting tomorrow at 5:30pm at the conference room of the Ada gym. Interested teams are requested to send their representatives to the meeting.

Entrance fee is only $100.

For more information about the Rotary caging, contact Elias Rangamar at 235-1775 or Abner Venus at 664-2552.

MDX B league meeting Friday

Meanwhile, another basketball competition will open next month with the staging of the MDX Sports Association Basketball League.

The league is for B division players and will open in the first week of August. Games will be played every Tuesday and Thursday, possibly at the Ada gym.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Rollers 2's Rainier Deleon Guerrero goes up strong to the basket during their game against Hi-Five in the U19 division of the Rotary caging last season at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Only the first 10 teams to register will be allowed to play in the inaugural league. Entrance fee is only $325.

Ground rules and other important details about the league will be discussed in a meeting this Friday at the Civic Center Court in Susupe at 5pm.

For more information, contact Ric Alejandro or Rex Yabut at 789-2074.

KFC/TACO

From Page 28

the lead to four and coaches Raymark Castro and Jomary Tumaquip brought Durant back into the game, along with Lee, who replaced Herbert Maranan.

Durant sat out for about three minutes early in the fourth due to foul trouble. When he returned to the floor, he got a feed from Francisco to put KFC/Taco Bell on the board. He made another shot in the paint, while Francisco escaped with a fastbreak layup to bring KFC/Taco Bell's lead back to double digits, 57-47, with less than five minutes left on the clock.

After scoring 9 straight points in the fourth canto, Team Pogi went cold, missing several shots from downtown. It failed to hit a single field goal in the last 6:16 of the game and drained only two free throws. Jeff Bahillo, who was consistent with his 3-point shooting throughout the regular season and in the first two games in the playoffs, canned only one triple (in the second period) and missed all his four attempts from beyond the arc in the fourth. He finished with his season-low of 7 points and his younger brother, Jason, struggled, too, nailing only 6.

While the Bahillos had an off night, Durant, Lee, and Francisco continued to sizzle for KFC/Taco Bell in fourth period. Francisco was steady at the point and added 4 more markers, while Lee converted two layups and had a split free throw, giving KFC/Taco Bell a comfortable 65-49 advantage, with 1:25 left on the clock. Durant made the last basket for KFC/Taco Bell and had 8 of his game-high 25 points in the final canto.

With the championship already secured, KFC/Taco Bell fielded its second stringers, while Team Pogi also went to its bench to close the game.

The title match started with KFC/Taco Bell stunning Team Pogi with an 11-point margin, 21-10. Francisco fueled KFC/Taco Bell's offense early, scoring 6 of the team's first 8 points, while Maranan picked up where the former left off, nailing 5 straight markers. Team Pogi hit two early triples in the opening canto, courtesy of Chan, but it had only four field goals in that period and Jeff Bahillo failed to make it to the scoreboard.

Jeff Bahillo canned his first and lone triple in the second quarter, as he tried to bring his team back. However, Durant was there to keep KFC/Taco Bell in the lead, 32-27, as the mobile big man dominated the paint with his teardrop shots.

The match remained close in the third before KFC/Taco Bell pulled away in the last four minutes of that period, turning a 39-34 advantage to a 51-38 lead. KFC/Taco Bell stretched the advantage to as much as 51-36, as Durant continued to muscle his way into the basket and fired 9 points in the third frame, while Maranan contributed 5.

The third quarter went on to conclude with KFC/Taco Bell ahead by 13, 51-38, before Team Pogi made a rally, but lost the game of streaks in the end.

With the victory, KFC/Taco Bell received the championship trophy from Joe Digno, manager of league sponsor JOS Corporation.

Meanwhile, in the battle for third place, Mawati edged Irish Spring, 57-54.

Harris Enriquez paced Mawati with 16 points, while Mario Ibanes and Jerome Reyes chipped in 15 and 11, respectively.

First Game

Mawati 57 – Enriquez 16, Ibanes 15, Reyes 11, Tenepere 7, Pena 3, Samonte 3.

Irish Spring 54 – Samson 18, Hernandez 17, Garcia 9, Leong 2, Brien 2, Hilario 2, Cordero 2.

Scoring by quarters: 16-18, 29-31, 48-42, 57-54.

Second Game

KFC/Taco Bell 68 – Durant 25, Francisco 12, Lee 10, Maranan 10, Mendiola 2, Deleon Guerrero 2.

Team Pogi 49 – Chan 14, Lansang 11, Sula 7, Je. Bahillo 7, Ja. Bahillo 4, Aranda 2.

Scoring by quarters: 21-10, 32-27, 51-38, 68-49.

CNMI

From Page 28

"I and head coach Randall Aguon are very proud of the way the boys competed this year. They were all business on the field in every game and gave it their all. We would like to send out a great thanks to representatives Ray Yumul, Joe Guerrero, and Ton Sablan, Senator Pete Reyes, Delloite & Touche, the parents of the players, everyone in the community that chipped in on our coin drives, the Saipan Little League Baseball, Inc. board of directors, especially Annie Flores and treasurer Roman Reyes, CNMI District Administrator James Ada, and his wife Lilian, and Lynn Duenas for making the trip possible," said manager Bernard Cabrera in an interview last Saturday.

Besides advancing to the finals, CNMI players also took home individual awards. Kainoa Wanket was chosen the best pitcher of the tournament, Jhace Palacios was selected as a gold glove centerfielder, Kenji Yamagata was declared the fastest base runner, and Darion Jones came away with home run derby bragging rights. All four players were presented with individual trophies.

Other members of the team were Jonathan Camacho, Jerald Cabrera, Kelvin Deleon Guerrero, Terson Eina, Mike Muna, Nathan Camacho, Virolanson Secharmedal, and Roke Tenorio.

In a recap of the CNMI's title run, an early solo blast from Jones got the team's engine started in its first match against Hong Kong. After that, the hits came in bunches, while Wanket, Palacios, and Mike Muna split time on the mound.

The CNMI coaches purposely tried to partition their pitchers to under 30 pitches per appearance in effort to keep as many weapons to their disposal on any given day. They also stressed to their guys the importance of throwing strikes, which is essential in order for the strategy to work.

Against Vietnam, the CNMI coaches believed the host country is still very much in a developmental state because, being primarily a soccer nation, it is relatively new to the sport. However, the visiting team attests that Vietnam have the spirit to play if only it had better coaching and more resources to further develop its programs.

Meanwhile, CNMI coaches agreed their best games were against the Philippines with the Commonwealth prevailing on both meetings.

In the first match, Kanoa almost pitched a complete game and received an early 1-0 lead after Muna scored on a passed ball. The Philippines tied it up at 1-all in the third inning, but a double to right field by Jerald Cabrera gave the lead back to the CNMI, 2-1.

The Philippines answered back with a couple hits in the bottom frame to knot the count at 2-all, but in the end, Rokie Tenorio delivered the go-ahead run with a double to the left side that scored Cabrera, and Palacios secured the close for Wanket in the last inning of regulation.

Playing with less pressure in its last pool play match against Indonesia, CNMI teed off at the plate and executed its pitching strategy very well heading into the playoffs.

Up next was the Philippines again and Muna broke the ice in the knockout match, but the former answered in the third inning with a solo homer to force a deadlock, 1-all.

Then Nathan Camacho drove in Terson Eina for a 2-1 advantage and after the Philippines tied up soon after, Eina belted the game-winner to put the CNMI in the finals.

As for Chinese-Taipei, the CNMI coaching staff acknowledged the host's well-rounded arsenal of pitching, hitting, and defense. CNMI put the bats on the ball, but many were swallowed up by Chinese-Taipei's squeaky-clean infield and a lot also turned to a number of impressive double plays.

A number of errors also cost the CNMI in key moments of the games, but there was absolutely no shame in capturing runner-up honors.

The team also got to play a scrimmage match with some adult volunteers. The CNMI showed the greenhorn adult players a thing or two about America's favorite past time, winning the friendly match via run rule. Vietnam youth players acted as coaches and managers during the game, while the CNMI coaches took the umpire roles.

"It was a lot of fun making friends with our hosts. We were very well accommodated, and all in all, given the fact that this was Vietnam's very first time to host an ASPAC event, we really enjoyed our experience and the hospitality they provided during our stay," added Cabrera.

DYS/SMF

From Page 28

John Darag added 7, Adrian De Luna chipped in 6, and C.J. Morales, Jun Fidelino, and Djaymarch Ong contributed 4 each.

After its 36-point output in the second canto, DYS/SMF continued to burn the hoop at the start of the second half, firing 34 points. VisMinda/Hi-Five was held to another 8-point production and with the team facing a huge, 29-88 deficit, it needed to move heaven and earth to recover in the fourth.

However, no VisMinda/Hi-Five miracle happened in the final canto and DYS/SMF went on to secure the lopsided win.

Morales top-scored for DYS with 29 points, while his four other teammates also finished in double figures. Darag logged 20, Ong had 18, and Espinosa and Fidelino tallied 13 and 10, respectively. Only Jethro Cruz and Elnathan Wong scored in twin digits for VisMinda/Hi-Five, making 13 and 11, respectively.

Individual awardees

Meanwhile, DYS/SMF dominated the individual awards presented at the end of the league last Sunday.

JP Iglecias won the division MVP, while teammates Ong and Espinosa made it to the Mythical Five, joining MDX/Armatech's Wilfredo Francisco and Dicky Feria, and VisMinda/Hi-Five's Cruz.

Ong got his second individual award after winning the scoring champion title.

DYS/SMF 114 – Morales 29, Darag 20, Ong 18, Espinosa 13, Fidelino 10, De Luna 8, Venus 7, Iglecias 6, Subang 2.

VisMinda/Hi-Five 44 – Cruz 13, Wong 11, Lucido 4, Conde 4, Sabangan 4, Arciaga 4, Diyco 3, Mercini 1.

Scoring by quarters: 18-13, 54-21, 88-29, 114-44.

EAFF

From Page 28

After the loss in the opening day of the EAFF qualifier, the CNMI Women's National Team will take a break today and will try to recover against Hong Kong tomorrow. The CNMI-Hong Kong tiff will be played at 4pm.

Meanwhile, the CNMI's male strikers will play their first game this afternoon, also against the host at 4pm.

Captain Steve McKagan will lead the team, which also has Nick Swaim, Kirk Schuler, Bo Barry, Lucas Knecht, Raphael Zapanta, Brian Lee, Kenneth Domingo, Enrico Del Rosario, goalie Gregzon Fontanilla, Eric Cooke, William Dunn, Dan Westphal, Peter Loken, Joe Miller, Arkie Reusora, Ruselle Zapanta, and Dan Stafford on its rosters.

After its duel against Guam, the CNMI will challenge Macau this Friday.

The winner of the three-nation tournament in the men's division will advance to the second round against Chinese-Taipei and North Korea. Hong Kong will host the next round of the men's EAFF qualifier. For the women's division, the Round 1 winner will join Chinese-Taipei and host China in the second round.

2012 UFO Masters Budweiser Cup Playoffs

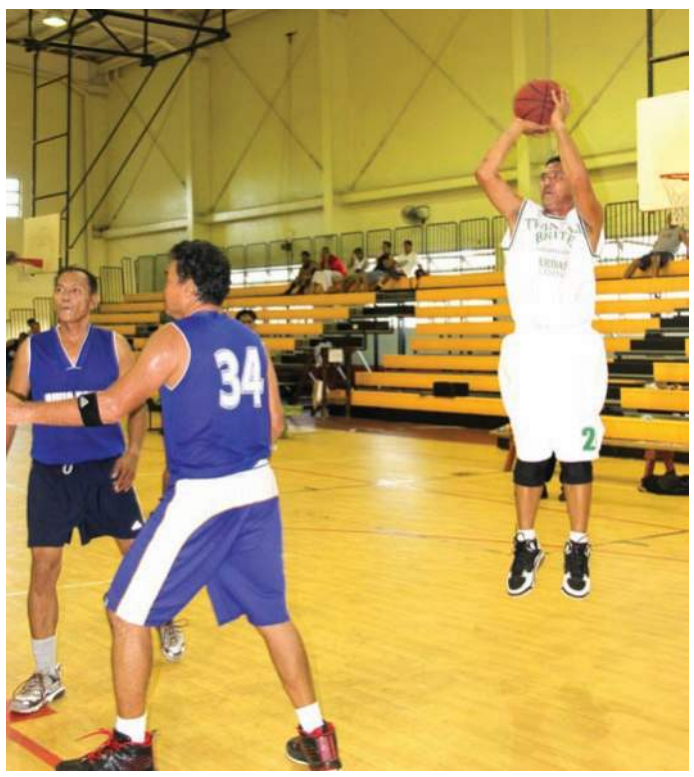
PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MDX/Armatech's Yosh Gabaldon pulls up for a running floater against Bayani/LBT's Ed Cosino during their title game in the 2012 UFO Masters Budweiser Cup last Sunday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

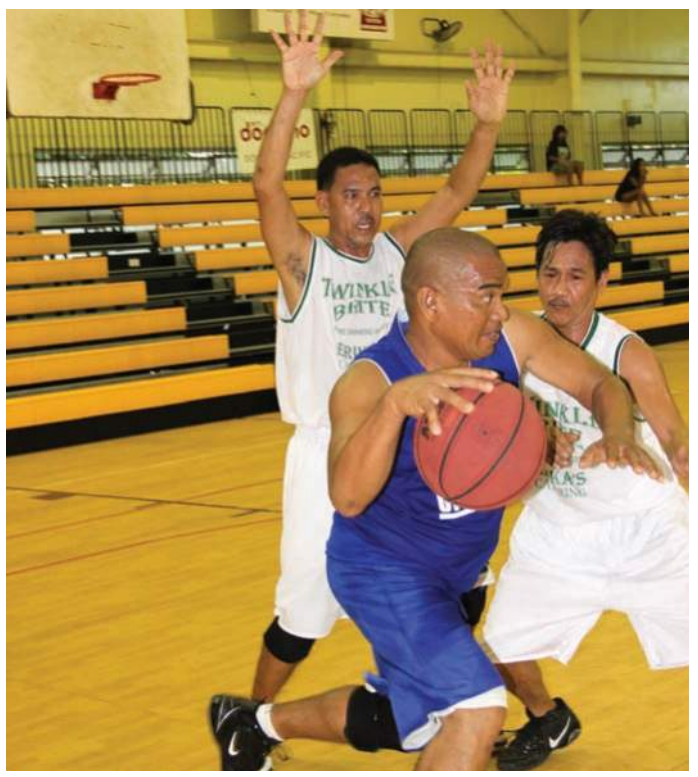
MDX/Armatech's Bruce Berline is hounded by Bayani/LBT defenders.

Bayani/LBT's Alex Ocampo goes up for a jumper against MDX/Armatech's Bruce Berline.

MDX/Armatech's Bong Malasarte pulls up for a baseline jumper against Bayani/LBT's Ed Cosino.



Laguna/Twinkle/Erika's Sonny Ebuen goes up for a baseline jumper.



VisMinda/Civic Boys' Roy Miguel tries to escape past Laguna/Twinkle/Erika defenders.

Bayani/LBT's Tony Diaz goes up for a lean-in jumper against a VisMinda/Civic Boys defender.

Batangas/Fong's Bakery's Jun Abedes, right, and MDX/Armatech's Art Trajano battle for the rebound.

Bayani/LBT's Felix Palacios looks for a teammate to pass the ball to.

Bayani/LBT's Jack Palacios, right, beats MDX/Armatech's Bruce Berline in the rebound play.

Saipan Tribune
Sports

KFC/Taco Bell wins championship

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Players and coaches of KFC/Taco Bell flash the No. 1 sign after beating Team Pogi in their title showdown in the DLX/DL JOS caging last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

KFC/Taco Bell ruled the 2012 DLX/DL JOS Inter-Color Basketball League after defeating Team Pogi, 68-49, in the winner-take-all finals last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

Jeff Durant, Ralph Francisco, and Joon Lee delivered the killer blows for KFC/Taco Bell in the last six minutes of the title match, as the trio scored all of the team's 17 points in the final canto to thwart Team Pogi's rally.

Down by as much as 15 in the third period, Team Pogi moved within four, 47-51, with 6:16 left on the clock. Team Pogi threatened a big comeback after starting the fourth canto with a 9-0 blast. Tim Sula began the rally with a triple, while Erlan Lansang and Brian Chan connected on one layup each, and Jeff Bahillo made a pair of free throws.

KFC/Taco Bell then pressed the panic button after Team Pogi sliced

See KFC/TACO on Page 26

CNMI begins EAFF Asian Cup campaign

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI Women's National Team played its first game in the EAFF Asian Cup 2013 Preliminary Competition Round 1 at the Leo Palace Resort in Guam yesterday and bowed to the host, 0-6.

The Commonwealth's female strikers fell behind at the break, 0-5. Other details of the opening match in the EAFF qualifier will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Thursday's edition.

Starting out for the CNMI were goalie Jhaneeka Atalig, defenders Jeralyn Castillo, Mikky Vargas, and Carrie Schuler, forwards Natalie Hill, Phalai Frink, Jeraldine Castillo, and Katie Peters, and midfielders, Melody Johnson, Alexa Vergara, and Megan Herber.

Other members of the team are Gabrielle Race, Marielle and Marilou Gariguez, Rachel and Michelle Masga, Liezel Tiples, and Lyvette Lacina.

See EAFF on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Members of the CNMI Team pose with their home and away jerseys and warm-up suits during a send-off dinner last Friday at the Seaside Hall of Kanoa Resort.

DYS/SMF claims U14 title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

DYS/SMF cruised its way to the championship of the U14 division of the 2012 UFO Docomo Pacific Cup after routing VisMinda/Hi-Five in the finals, 114-44, last Sunday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Abner Venus-coached DYS/SMF secured the championship as early as the second quarter when the team opened a big 54-21 halftime advantage.

DYX/SMF's CJ Morales pulls up for a jumper against VisMinda/Hi-Five's Elnathan Wong during the fourth quarter of their title game in the U14 division of the UFO Docomo Pacific Cup last Sunday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Before the DYS/SMF's breakaway, VisMinda/Hi-Five was still in the thick of fight after the first quarter, as the latter was behind by only five, 13-18.

Elnathan Wong and Jethro Cruz kept VisMinda/Hi-Five afloat in the opening quarter, combining for 11 points in the first period. Mike Arciaga made the two other points for VisMinda/Hi-Five in the first frame.

Six different players lit up the scoreboard for DYS/SMF in the opening quarter to take the 5-point lead, which ballooned to 23 at halftime, as the eventually champions turned on the heat in the second period. DYS/SMF outgunned VisMinda in the second frame, 36-8.

Again, DYS/SMF's countless offensive options made the big difference in the second-period attack, as every player Venus fielded in the game found a way to score at least two baskets apiece. Michael Espinosa had 9,

See DYS/SMF on Page 26

CNMI Junior All-Stars celebrate finals stint

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The CNMI Junior All-Stars had a beach barbecue party near Aquarius Resort in Chalan Kanoa last Saturday to celebrate their finals appearance in the 2012 Asia Pacific Regional Tournament held in Vietnam earlier this month.

The Commonwealth players won four of their five games in the pool play, falling only to eventual champion Chinese-Taipei in the elimination, 1-5.

The CNMI started out with three wins, besting Hong Kong, 8-2; routing host team Vietnam, 21-0; and downing Philippines, 3-2, before stumbling to Chinese-Taipei, 1-5.

The CNMI Junior All-Stars went on finish second overall and got another crack at Chinese-Taipei after 9-2 victory over Indonesia and an exciting 3-2 playoff win over the Philippines.

The CNMI would fall to Taipei in the finals, 1-5, but still took a lot of positive things from the finals experience.

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WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

The CNMI Junior All-Stars and their coaches and supporters pose for a group photo at a barbeque party held last Saturday at the Bantalon Beach in Chalan Kanoa.